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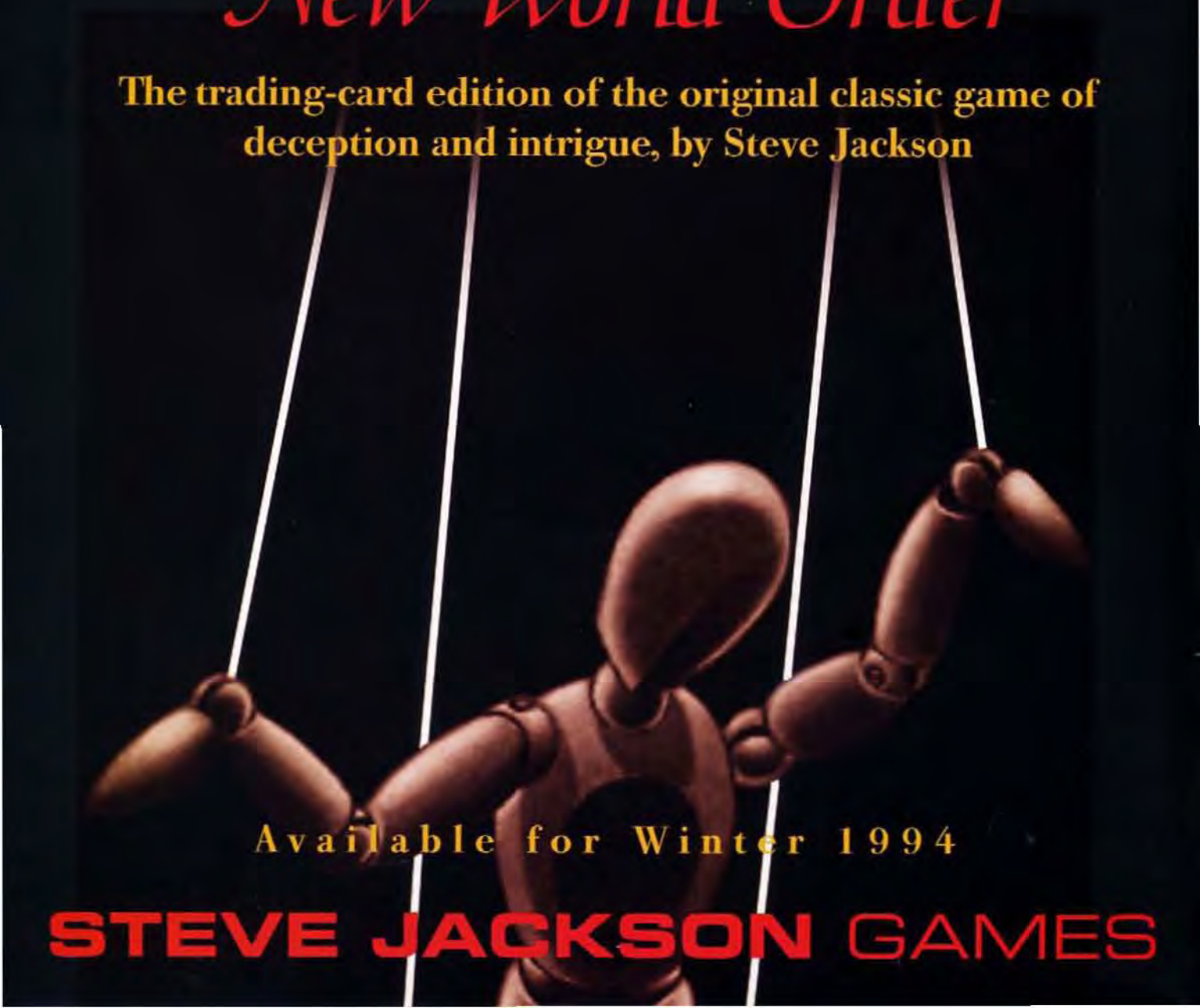
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Challenge
Issue 76

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ABOUT THE COVER

Some intrepid citizens, aware of the threat posed by cyborgs in *Dark Conspiracy*, have tried to capture one inside an abandoned building moments before its destruction. All they've accomplished is amusing it in this collaboration between artist Christina Wald and art director Brad

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opinion

FROM THE MANAGEMENT
By Frank Chadwick

Quo Vadis?

It's no secret that 1994 had some rough spots for GDW, but it had its brighter moments as well. Winning best new RPG for **Traveller® The New Era** at Origins was certainly one of them, and finally reaching a settlement in the suit with TSR was another (although that one was more along the lines of feeling so good when you stop hitting yourself with the hammer). Having survived 1994, what do we do for an encore?

That's largely been decided by you. Our main emphasis for 1995 will be **Traveller**, but the emphasis in the products will be a bit different. We've spent the time since the game came out putting the rules systems in place. Increasingly the fans have been asking for more adventure and background material, and that's what we'll be doing this next year. Also, we've said that the New Era is not static, but rather is a changing, evolving environment. This coming year you'll see that happen in a big way in our support material.

We have shied away from simple free-standing adventures for quite some time, and that's a policy we'll stick with. The sourcebooks will have more structured adventure material in them, though, and **Vampire Fleets™** is a good example of this. The adventures, when run in sequence, form a coherent campaign which, once finished, will change Coalition Space forever, and really get the RC moving coreward and toward the Black Curtain. Taken individually, each adventure illustrates a major chunk of the background and source material in the book. We're pretty excited with this approach to sourcebooks. Let us know what you think.

Beyond our actual production schedule, we're going to be trying to integrate **Challenge** magazine **Traveller** articles more closely with our published material. We plan to go about that in a variety of ways, but this issue's adventure that's a prequel and introduction to **Vampire Fleets** is a good example.

Beyond **Traveller**, our major new release for the year will be **Armor 21**, now set for a June ship date. This was the overwhelming winner of the **Twilight** reader survey conducted through 1993 and 1994. It covers modern high-tech (well, sometimes) combat in the first two decades of the next century. For equipment it relies almost exclusively on actual hardware currently on the drawing boards or in conceptual stages. But there are other changes in warfare that are developing, and although many of these are technology-driven they aren't as directly related to killing power.

Take, for example, the fighting in Grozny in December and January. On the surface, this looks like a not-very-sophisticated street brawl with tanks and assault rifles for added color. Technology doesn't look like it played all that significant a role. Look again.

When the Russian initial offenive stalled and casualties mounted, the Russians claimed everything was going according to plan, but everyone, and I do mean *everyone*, knew that was a lie almost within the hour. Why? *Satellite feeds.* BBC, CNN, and others had correspondents inside of Grozny interviewing Chechnyan fighters as they came off the front lines, and they fed their storys via satellite uplink to the whole world, in some cases live. The effects on Russian public opinion as well as on diplomatic and military leaders in Europe, was dramatic. In the next century, this is going to be the rule, not the exception, and will profoundly influence how armies fight wars. Think about it.

Ars Gratia Artis

This is a magazine about science fiction gaming, and we try to stick to that theme fairly religiously. Once in a while something comes along that doesn't quite fit that mold, but deserves our attention anyway. Last December I came across just such a thing, a wonderful little book called **Why Cats Paint: A Theory of Feline Aesthetics.**

But wait—what am I thinking? Any book that includes serious discussion of concepts like Points of Harmonic Resonance, Ley Lines, and then announces itself to be "...a registered international experiment in inter-species morphic resonance and is designed to test the hypothesis of formative causation" should be right at home in these pages. And **Why Cats Paint** is all of that and much, much more.

Let me begin by asking you a question. How do you feel about art, particularly modern art? Do you enjoy trying to understand it, find yourself intellectually challenged by it, and by the different ways it makes you think about what you see and experience? That is to say, are you an art *aficionado*, or, even better, a *cognoscenti*? Or are you instead like an art professor I know who once dismissed the entire corpus of work of one prolific young artist with a shrug and the comment "It's okay if you like rags on sticks."

If you are in the first group, you will hate **Why Cats Paint** (once you realize that you are being had, big–time), because under the apparently-serious art theory and analysis of "important" contemporary feline artists, this is a savage—and hilarious—attack on modern art and art criticism. Of course by extension this makes it a grand send-up of the whole trendy, pseudo-intellectual, "hipper than thou" mindset in general, and some of you may remember from an earlier editorial of mine that this aspect of the book alone is enough to guarrantee it a soft, cozy spot next to the fireplace of my soul. (At this point the writer pauses to mount an old soap box.)

I mean, doesn't the notion that "hip" can be packaged and *merchandised* (for crying out loud) strike you as just a bit absurd? Don'tyou find it curious that iconoclasticism has become an *icon?* Don't you ever find yourself wondering if under all the tatoos, nose rings, bad haircuts, and lists of alternative rock bands (this week's list, of course, not last week's), there lurks a *dweeb?*

I certainly do and, more's the point, I fervently hope so, for two reasons. First, the alternative is too unsettling, that being that a genuine human spirit has been replaced by just a fashion statement. Second, because I find dweebs more interesting. Fashion statements are usually long on attitude and short on ideas, and I like ideas, which is also why I like science fiction; it's about ideas, and this magazine (on occasion, and when it's at its best) is about ideas as well. (Bet you didn't think I'd get back to the magazine, did you?)

Why Cats Paint, written by an artist and an art critic, maintains its sense of authenticity and serious self-importance throughout, from the dust jacket notes to the bibliography, never once cracking a smile or letting on in any overt way that it is anything other than what it perports to be, and it is all the more effective and hilarious for that. I cannot remember ever reading a satire so perfectly crafted or so devestatingly on target. Pick up a copy of **Why Cats Paint.** You'll laugh, you'll cry, it'll change your life.

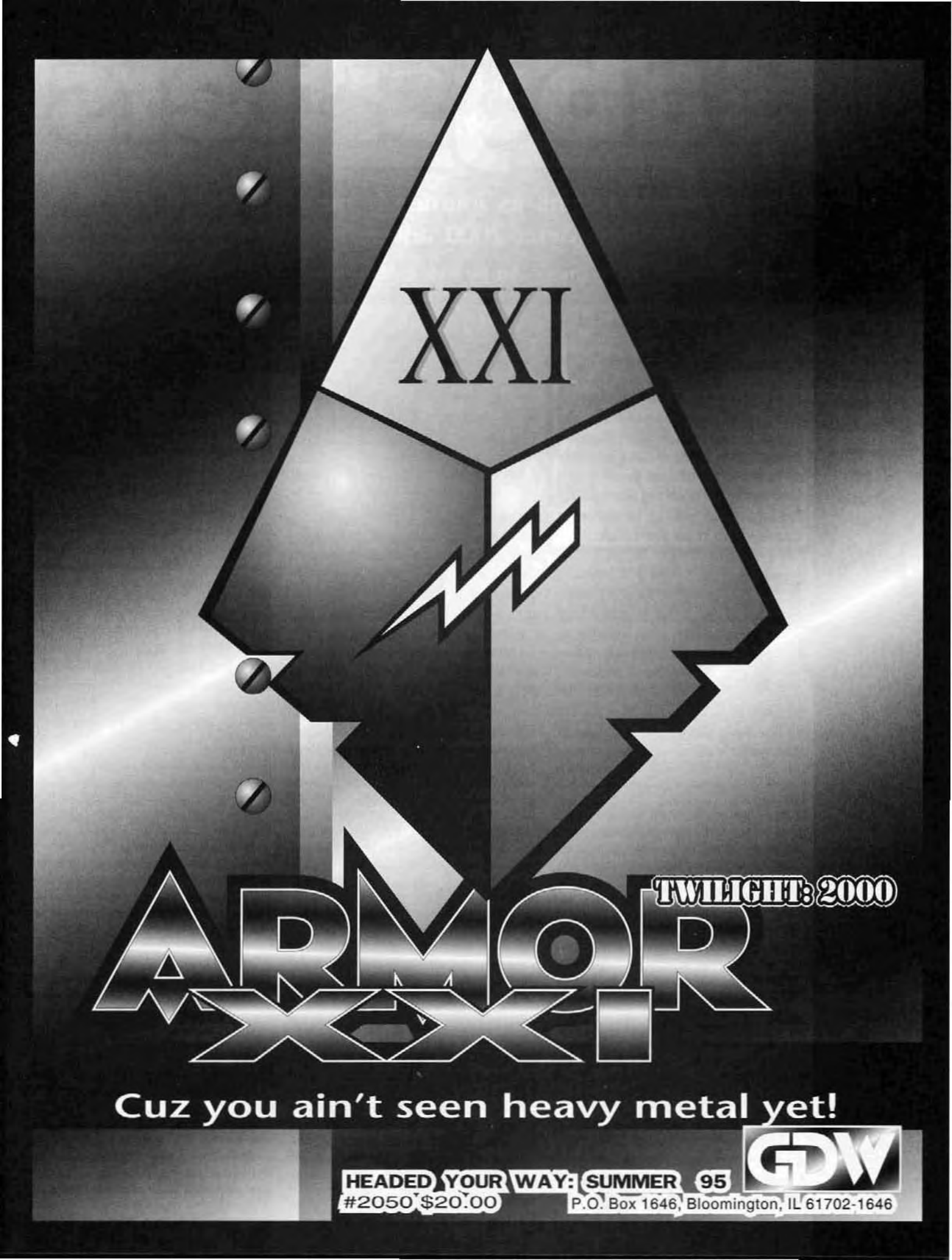
We Came, We Saw, We Novelized

Shortly after you read this the very first official **Traveller** novel, prepared with editorial oversight by GDW, will be in the stores. Written by the estimable Paul Brunette, a long-time follower of the Black 'n' Red, it is beautifully faithful to the **Traveller** universe, filled with interesting and well-realized characters, and tells a story well worth reading. Grab a copy and read it. You won't be disappointed.

Challenge *magazine welcomes your letters. The opinions presented do not necessarily reflect those of the magazine.* ***Challenge*** *reserves the right to edit letters. Write to* ***Challenge*** *Letters, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.*

Oops

Terry Sofian's name was misspelled in **Challenge 73** and **74.** We apologize for the error.


XXI
TWILIGHT: 2000
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XXI
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Babysitters

An ancestral sword begins its journey home in this Merc: 2000 adventure

by Glenn Patton and Dirk Folmer Art by Kirk E. Wescom

Some of the American soldiers in WWII came home from the Pacific front with Japanese souvenirs. You know, helmets, pistols, swords. Now, some Japanese families are trying to buy back the swords. I guess some of them are hundreds of years old and had been in the families for generations. Some families are even willing to spend a couple million to get them back.

The following scenario is designed for any mercenary group, especially those who believe in "strength through superior firepower." Referees, this is an excellent opportunity to poke holes in some of the inflated egos that may have arisen in your game.

CONTACT

The group is contacted through the normal channels by a representative of Yamaguchi Shipping, who was given their names by a former patron of theirs. The characters are asked to provide physical security for a courier who is bringing the Yamaguchi ancestral katana back from the United States, where it has been for 57 years. This katana was lost during World War II and only recently was discovered in the possession of an ex-Army Air Corps officer. After much negotiation, a total of $750,000 was agreed upon as payment to the officer. Thus, the sword's journey began.

There is some concern that certain competitors will attempt to gain possession of the sword during the trip. The PC group will be paid $10,000 upon the receipt of the sword by Yamaguchi. All travel accommodations have been prearranged, with passage to Japan to be by boat, actually the flagship of Yamaguchi Shipping, the *Katori Maru.*

No firearms of any type will be allowed on board ship, as Yamaguchi is a law-abiding citizen, and the firearms laws of Japan are very strict. If any characters are caught with a firearm, on-board ship or in Japan, they will be left to the justice system of Japan, and the contract will be terminated.

Hotel accommodations in Japan will be provided by the patron. If the PCs wish other accommodations, they will have to pay for them out of their own pockets. (Remember that a Big Mac costs about $6 in Japan, possibly more in Tokyo.)

SETUP

The Yakuza have been waiting for an opportunity to gain leverage over Yamaguchi. Now the opportunity has arisen in the form of the katana. If they were to use the katana as a bargaining point, the Yakuza might be able to force Yamaguchi to let them use his ships for drug smuggling. Their entire plan consists of using one of the ship's crew to sabotage the ship 10 nautical miles outside the Tokyo harbor, taking a snatch team on board, grabbing the courier and the sword and returning to their clan. The snatch team will consist of five men, all armed with silenced 9mm automatics and knives. These men will be considered Veterans for combat purposes.

As an extra measure of paranoia, the PCs will meet up with a member of the Mafia in Los Angeles. It seems that the family has gotten wind of some Yakuza operation involving Yamaguchi Shipping. No threats are offered or implied, but interesting information may be rewarded. Later on, once they reach Tokyo, the PCs will notice an American following them on occasion who disappears as soon as he is spotted. This is an Average: Observation or Streetwise task.

TROUBLE

Once on-board the ship, the PCs find the accommodations to be quite luxurious, especially for a freighter. They may want to get a feel for the crew and roam the ship. They won't find anything amiss. The voyage proceeds as planned, with the exception of a few mechanical problems starting at the Philippines. Once the ship reaches the 10-mile mark, the engines grind to a halt, and the Yakuza plan is implemented. It is entirely up to the referee whether the PCs will be given the opportunity to foil the Yakuza. Or the PCs may arrive on deck just in time to see a boat slipping away from the ship, to find the remains of one of the snatch team laying on the deck, nearly cut in half (yes, the used the sword on the Yakuza team).

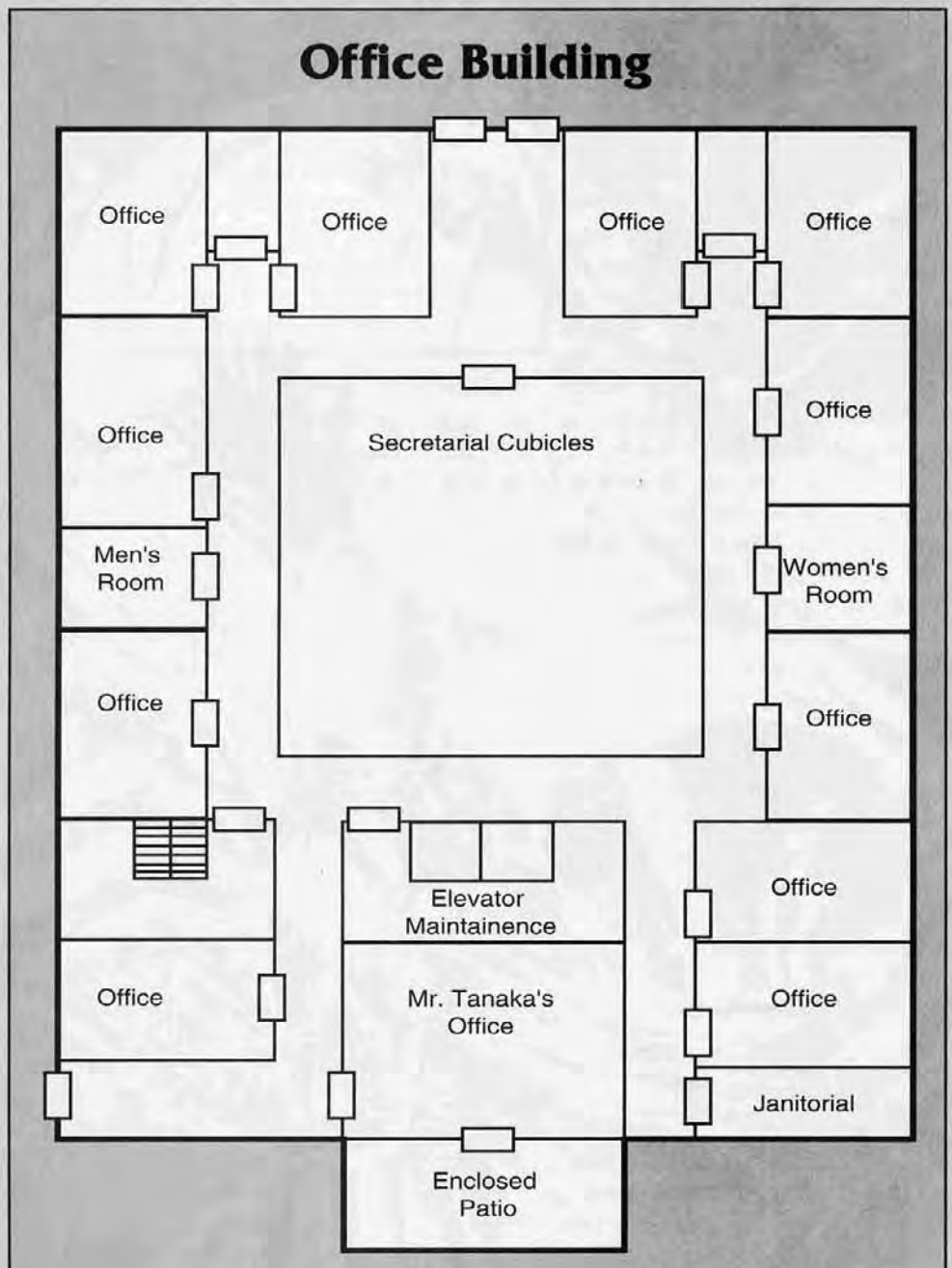
If the Yakuza get away with the sword, the characters will find things getting weird. Whenever any of the team is in the same room as any of the crew members, they will notice that the crew turns away from them and refuses to acknowledge their presence. (Any character with any background in Japanese culture will know that this means that the team is considered dead in the eyes of the crew.)

When the ship finally docks, the PCs are met by Yamaguchi himself. He immediately says, "So, you



lost my sword, the soul of my family. Well, accidents happen. Obviously, since you Gaijin have failed, there will be no payment. Reservations have been made for your immediate return to your country on-board one of my private aircraft. Get your things and go. You are dismissed." If the PCs meekly accept their fate, the adventure is over.

Should the PCs attempt to convince the patron to allow them to retrieve the sword, he will grudgingly give them 48 hours in which to retrieve it. If they fail this time, they will be sent back where they came from. He will, however, give them the name of the Yakuza clan that he thinks is responsible, and the name and location of the building that is thought to be their headquarters. As the clan leader, Tanaka, and his business are both quite legitimate front operations, a direct confrontation will only result in the PCs getting thrown out of the office. Also, due to Japanese gun control laws, the frontal assault method is completely out. Of course, breaking and entering, while illegal, would probably prove to be the most successful approach.



*On top of this, use the Thai Hotel, meeting level, from **Bangkok Sourcebook**, page 91.*

The sword is in the safe in Tanaka's private office. Security is very stiff and should prove to be quite a challenge to most groups. The guards are armed with night sticks and capsicum spray canisters. (see **Challenge 61**, "Spooktek") Treat them as Experienced NPCs for combat purposes. All windows and doors are wired with induction triggered alarms, requiring an Average: Electronics roll to disarm. The hallways are covered by motion sensors with cameras at key points. Tanaka's office is covered by motion sensors, sound sensors and a camera, while the wall safe is booby-trapped by a chemical grenade that fills the room with capsicum mist.

ENDING

Once the sword is recovered, the patron will treat them much more politely, treat them to an expensive dinner and pay them in full. He will warn them that the Yakuza have now lost face because of them and will be striking back—and soon. It would be good to leave the country as soon as possible and to look over their shoulders every once in a while. The referee may let the PCs go home peacefully and have the Yakuza pop up later, or may have them make an attempt tonight. The rest is up to you.

NPCs

Yamaguchi: Level III patron. Honorable in the Japanese style, but ruthless when honor demands it. Regards the sword as an extension of his family's soul.

Tanaka: Veteran NPC. Ruthless in his dealings with others, he will seek to avenge any loss of face. Brutal, he enjoys inflicting pain on others.

Yakuza Members: 70% Experienced, 25% Veteran, 5% Elite. Various forms of armament. Most carry the tanto-style knife.

Courier: Melee (armed) 8, History 7. He is there to verify the sword's authenticity and provide a trusted escort for the Yamaguchi family's ancestral sword. He is also an excellent swordsman in his own right. Ω

challenge submissions

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Status: You will normally be notified within 90 days of your article's acceptance, rejection or need for a rewrite. If you have not heard from us within 90 days, you may inquire in writing. Accepted articles are placed in a stockpile to be used as needed. Authors are asked not to submit changes to an article once the article has been accepted, except under the most extreme circumstances. Challenge may without penalty release its claim to previously accepted articles.

Payment: Challenge will no longer offer payment for articles published, effective with issue 77. Articles accepted after issue 77 will be published in a first American publication rights basis. This means that after publication, all rights revert to you (the author) instead of staying with GDW. (Obviously, any material in the article which was originally GDW's material, such as rules, charts, characters, etc., remains GDW's.)

You will *not* be notified of which issue your article will appear in, but will receive a complimentary copy about *90 days after the issue is released.*

Format: All manuscripts *must be typed, double-spaced,* on standard-sized white or off-white paper. Staple each article separately. The first page must contain the *author's name, address* and *social security number,* as well as the *title of the article,* the *game it refers to,* the *publisher of that game* and a *word count.* Each page must be numbered and contain the author's name.

Articles use three levels of headings (refer to past issues for examples). The first level is the article title. Next, any divisions within the article need *section headings*, which are all caps on their own line (like Subject Matter, below). Any further divisions within a section need *subsection headings*, which are upper and lower case, followed by a colon and text (like Format, above).

References: Always include clear, precise sketches of maps, diagrams or pieces of equipment for artist reference. If you send photocopies for artist reference, always indicate the original source or publication. If your article includes tables, send a printout of each table the way it should appear. Always send a copy of your technical design spreadsheets, if applicable (especially for Traveller). Also, please include a bibliography of your sources, especially with historical or geographical submissions. Mark both technical design sheets and bibliographies "for reference only."

Computers: *Submissions on disk are encouraged and will expedite the publication process.* Send disks in a suitable mailer, *along with a printed copy.* Disks will *not* be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped disk mailer. Always keep all printer commands, page numbering and so on out of the text. We are able to take submissions only from Apple Macintosh, IBM PC and compatibles. Apple Macintosh files may be saved only as ASCII text, or as MacWrite or MS Word files. IBM PC and compatible files must be MS-DOS and must be saved as ASCII text.

Modem: Modem/computer bulletin board/electronic submissions are not accepted at this time.

FAX: FAX submissions must be sent after 6 p.m. CST. FAX submissions of more than 20 pages must have prior approval. Disk/hardcopy submissions are preferred (see Computers, above).

SUBJECT MATTER

We will consider articles on any science-fiction roleplaying game by any publisher, including Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000, Traveller, Dark Conspiracy, Space: 1889, 2300 AD, Shadowrun, Star Trek, Star Wars, BattleTech, High Colonies, Call of Cthulhu, Paranoia, Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0., Vampire, Werewolf and others. We will not provide coverage for any products produced by or licensed to Palladium Books, at the request of Palladium Books.

Adventure scenarios are preferred. Sourcebook-type articles should be combined with adventure ideas whenever possible. *Game variants* should be playtested in advance by you and be applicable to a broad range of gaming situations. *Referee's notes* should give hints to the referee on how to increase interest in the game, make his life easier or spark his imagination. In general, articles should be consistent with previously published information.

Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000: Articles must be usable with Twilight: 2000 version 2.2 or Merc: 2000. Ideas include an adventure situation with a geographical setting, short equipment descriptions, generic personalities or locations for use in a variety of situations, and examinations of modern military life or military equipment.

Traveller: All Traveller articles must be usable in the Traveller: The New Era universe. Include tasks and game statistics where appropriate. Ideas include an adventure with relevant background data, bestiary or short equipment description. Articles may follow either the "adventure nugget" or traditional Challenge format.

Space: 1889, 2300 AD, Others: Short adventures (2000-3000 words), plus a page or so of maps. See Twilight Encounters (a GDW supplement) for samples of the preferred format.

Reviews: Product reviews are not limited to the gaming systems normally covered in Challenge. Evaluations of science-fiction films (limited to recent releases *on video*, due to timeliness), novels and other products are also accepted. All reviews must include the approximate date of release, plus the publisher, price, credits and components, if applicable. See previous reviews for format. Reviews should be 500-1000 words in length. Challenge will not publish a review by anyone listed in the credits of the product reviewed.

Fiction: Challenge is not seeking fiction at this time. Fiction submissions will not be read.

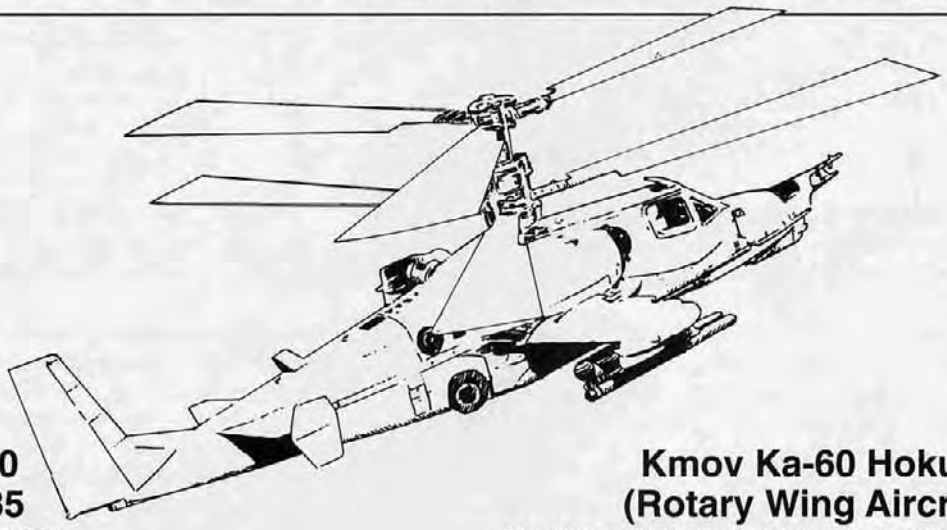
Art: Artists may send copies of their art portfolio to the Challenge art director. Never send an original or your only copy.

Good luck. If you have any questions, send them along with a SASE to:
Michelle Sturgeon, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA

ID/D AEROWEAPONS

A Merc: 2000 aircraft and weapons addendum by Roman J. Andron

ID/D, or Internal Defense Development, is the term used by national security personnel to refer to counter-guerrilla operations. A key factor in ID/D operations is close air support provided by aeroweapons platforms such as ground attack aircraft and helicopters. Three such aeroweapons platforms which have gained notoriety and prominence in the **Merc: 2000** world are profiled below.



***Tr Mov:* 1400**
***Com Mov:* 35**
***Fuel Cap:* 1500**
***Fuel Cons:* 1500**

Kmov Ka-60 Hokum (Rotary Wing Aircraft)

***Merc 2000** Price:* $8,700,000
***Twilight 2000** Price:* $25,000,000
Armament: 30mm cannon
Ammunition: 500 x 30 mm
Fuel Type: AvG
Load: See weapons options
Veh Wt: 10,800 kg (maximum takeoff weight)
Crew: 1
Mnt: 15 (estimated)
Minimum Landing/Takeoff Zone: 48 m

Damage Record
Pilot:
Radio:
Instruments:
Hardpoint: 1 2 3 4
Turret:
Ammunition:
Engine:
Fuel (%Consumed or Destroyed):

Combat Equipment: Head-up display, IHADSS helmet-mounted sight, FLIR, laser designator, integral flare and chaff dispensers, IR suppression.

Weapons Options: Four wet pylons, each capable of accepting a UV-32-57 rocket pod, a six-round Vikhr pod or a 300-kg drop tank.

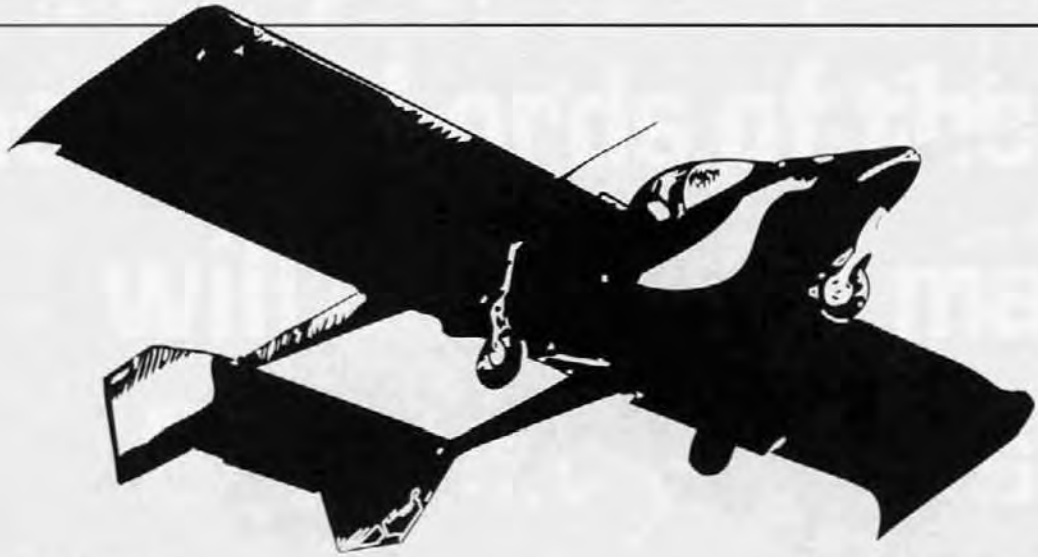
Weapon	*ROF*	*Mag*	*Rng*	*Ammo*	*Damage*	*Pen*
30mm 2AL	5	500	250	API	C:6 B:4	5/1/-2
UV-32-57	16	32	400	57mm HE	C:8 B:28	-4C

Weapon	*Mag*	*Rng*	*Damage*	*Pen*
Vikhr 6-pod	6	2500	C:12 B:12	115C

The Kamov Hokum was accepted as the Commonwealth of Independent States' new attack helicopter in 1992, beating out the Mil Bureaur's Mi-28 Havoc design in an army competition. The Hokum deviates in a number of ways from the standard helicopter design set by the US AH-1 and AH-64. The most visible deviation is the twin coaxial rotors. This configuration allows the helicopter to achieve top speeds of 350 km/h and 3G-loading while significantly reducing the chance of helicopter combat losses from tail rotor and boom failures, the most problematic areas on any helicopter. The second deviation is the inclusion of a head-up display in conjunction with a helmet-mounted sight, which when combined with the speed capabilities suggests that this helicopter is to be flown more like a combat-support fixed-wing aircraft than an attack helicopter. Finally, the Hokum breaks the pilot/CPG team approach to attack helicopters by being a pilot-only machine. The pilot's position is equipped with an ejection seat. Explosive bolts in the rotors blow off the blades to permit a safe ejection.

Armament consists of a right-side-mounted 30mm cannon taken from the BMP-2, which can be pointed outward from the fuselage by 15 degrees and can be tilted as much as 10 degrees upward and 70 degrees downward (estimated). Rounding out the weapon systems are four "wet" pylons which can carry armament or fuel pods. Weapons options include six-round pods of the Vikhr laser-guided antitank missile and UV-32-57 rocket pods. Defensive measures include integral IR suppression, flare and chaff launchers, and spaced steel armor proof against fire up to and including 20mm.

The Hokum saw a great deal of service in ethnic clashes within the CIS and the breakaway republics as well as having substantial export sales to Middle Eastern and Pacific Rim nations. The Ka-50 is and remains a capable helicopter and is more than a match for any other in the world.



Damage Record
Pilot:
Radio:
Instruments:
Hardpoint: 1 2 3 4
Strap-on Turret (optional):
Turret Ammunition (optional):
Engine:
Fuel (%Consumed or Destroyed):

Combat Equipment: No standard loadout. Has been fitted with low-light video surveillance kit (low-light stabilized TV camera, cockpit video display, realtime video downlink). Other standard combat gear would include passive Night-Vision goggles for the pilot.

Weapons Options:

Four Hardpoints: Standard weapon options include 2 x BEI Defense Systems Hydra-70 seven-tube rocket launchers on two outboard hardpoints plus twin gun pods on the inboard hardpoints. Gun pods include M60 MG gun pods (each with 500 rounds ammunition) or SUU-11B/A 7.62mm Minigun pods with 1500 rounds ammunition. A 7.62mm strap-on turret has already been mentioned. In place of gun pods, a single ASP-30 30mm cannon with 200 rounds HEDP/HEI may be mounted. Bombs may also be carried and include the Mk-81 250 lb GP bombs and 250 lb frangible napalm canisters.

Loadout Weights:

BEI M146 Control System Plus 2 x Hydra-70 Seven-Round Launchers: 195 kg
M-60 MG Pod with 500 Rounds Ammunition: 35 kg
SUU-11B/A Minigun Pod: 150 kg
ASP-30 30mm Cannon Pod: 250 kg
PGSTS-762 Strap-On 7.62mm Minigun Turret with IHADSS Control System and 2000 Rounds: 200 kg. (arc 45 degrees left, 45 degrees right of centerline, forward facing) (fictional system)
Low-Light Video Surveillance System: 60 kg

Weapon	*ROF*	*Mag*	*Rng*	*Ammo*	*Damage*	*Pen*
BEI Hydra-7012		7	425	HE	C:8 B: 35	-4C
				WP	C:2 B: 25	Nil
				APERS	C:8 B: 44	-2C
ASP-30 gun pod		30200	1000	HEDP	C:1 B:2	-6C
				HEI	C:2 B:5	Nil
M3 tripod		80	1000	HEDP	C:2 B:2	-6C
				HEI	C:2 B:5	Nil

						–Recoil–		
Weapon	*ROF*	*Dam*	*Pen*	*Blk*	*Mag*	*SS*	*Brst*	*Rng*
M-60 MG pod	5	4	2-3-Nil	6	500	*	*	90
SUU-11B/A pod	100	4	2-3-Nil	4	1500	*	*	90
PGSTS-762	100	4	2-3-Nil	4	2000	*	*	90

Sadler A-22 LASA (Fixed Wing Aircraft)

The A-22 Light Air Support Aircraft is designed specifically for the Third World ID/D and close air support role. It draws much of its heritage from ultralight and sport aircraft. It is light, inexpensive and easy to maintain while still being able to precisely deliver a large amount of ordnance onto a guerrilla target.

The A-22 can be transported by truck to any expedient airbase and can be ready for flight five minutes after arrival. A Kevlar pod and Lexan canopy provide the pilot with minimal protection against small-arms fire.

Among the features which made the A-22 so favored were the engine, the recovery system and the optional minigun turret mount. The engine is a simple Chevy V-6 burning regular gasoline; parts and mechanical expertise are therefore available world-wide. The recovery system consists of a ballistic parachute which lowers the entire aircraft to the ground in the event of an emergency.

Finally, the minigun turret is a strap-on design which fits under the cockpit and includes an M-134 7.62mm minigun with 2000 rounds of ammunition. The unique feature of the turret is the linkage with the pilot's IHADSS-type helmet, allowing the gun to hit wherever the pilot is looking. It is this one feature which has made the turret system highly effective. No provision is made for in-flight or buddy refueling.

The A-22 gained a great deal of favor with Latin American nations such as Nicaragua, El Salvador and Peru, and it has been in service with several Central and South American nations since the mid-1990s.

***Tr Mov:* 1224**
***Com Mov:* 31**
***Fuel Cap:* 80**
***Fuel Cons:* 160**

Merc: 2000 *Price:* $200,000 (A-22); $225,000 (T/A-22 two-seat trainer/attack craft)
Twilight: 2000 *Price:* $450,000 (A-22); $550,000 (T/A-22)
Fuel Type: G, A
Load: 450 kg
Veh Wt: 386 kg (empty)
Crew: 1
Mnt: 7
Runaway: VSTOL
Min Runway Takeoff (full load)/Landing: 153/183 m
Stall: 23



***Merc 2000** Price:* $4,500,000
***Twilight 2000** Price:* $7,800,000
Fuel Type: AvG
Armament: 20mm GA-1 cannon, four inboard wing pylons, two wingtip AA missile launch rails
Ammunition: 500 x 20mm
Load: See weapons options
Veh Wt: 8000 kg (maximum takeoff weight)
Crew: 2
Mnt: 13
Minimum Landing/Takeoff Zone: 50m

Damage Record
Crewmembers: Pilot Co-pilot/Gunner
Radio:
Instruments:
Controls:
Hardpoint: 1 2 3 4
Launch Rail: 1 2
20mm Turret:
Turret Ammunition:
Engine:
Fuel (%Consumed or Destroyed):

Combat Equipment: Armored cockpit, FLIR, IR suppression, laser designator, HUD, IHADSS.

Weapons Options:

2 Wingtip Rails: Each accepts one AIM-9M Sidewinder or South African V3B Kukri IR-guided air-to-air missile.

4 Hardpoints: Each can be fitted with one 127mm Batteleur quad-pack or 68mm South African 18-round pods.

Weapon	*ROF*	*Mag*	*Rng*	*Ammo*	*Damage*	*Pen*
20mm GA-1	50	500	250	API	10	3/-2/-5
				HE	C:1 B:2	-8c
68mm Rocket	12	18	425	HE	C:8 B:28	-4C
				WP	C:2 B:20	Nil
				APERS	C:8 B:36	-4C
Batteleur 127mm	1	4	500	HE	C:12 B:20	0C

Use AIM-9M data for V3B Kukri missile. Ω

ATLAS CSH-2 Rooivalk/Kestrel (Rotary Wing Aircraft)

The Republic of South Africa (RSA) armaments industry has managed to produce some very effective weapons systems despite an international arms embargo against the white government.

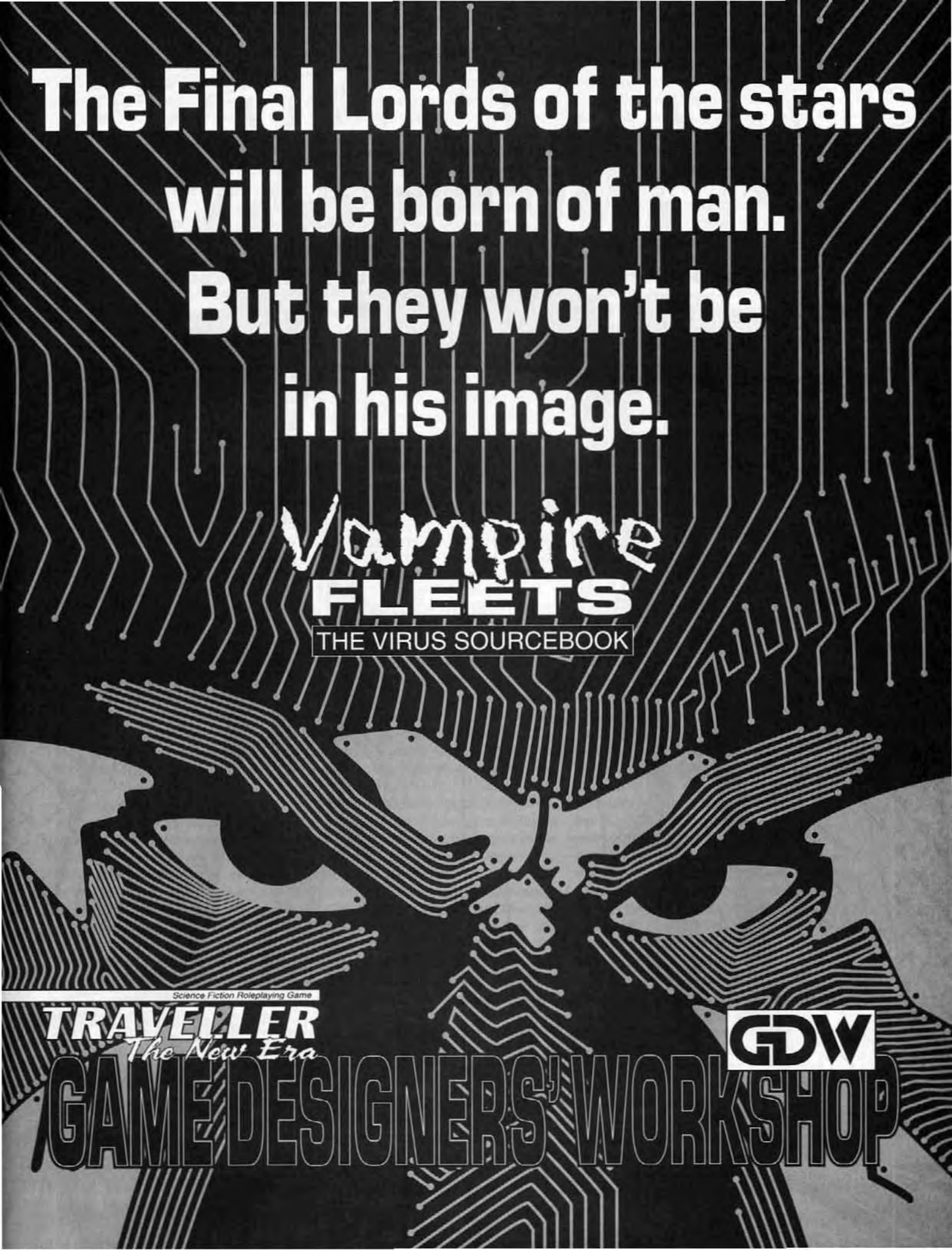
One example is the Combat Support Helicopter-2 Rooivalk, which has had numerous export sales since production started in late 1993.

The Rooivalk is a substantial redesign of the French Aerospatiale AS 330 Puma airframe, involving fuselage reconstruction, engine relocation and significant transmission modification.

The result is a two-crewmember attack helicopter similar to the Agusta A129. Stub wings have been added to provide weapon hardpoints, and the South African GA-1 20mm cannon has been mounted in a stabilized chin turret. High-tech electronics have been added, including FLIR, laser designator, pilot's head-up display, and IHADSS helmet-mounted sights, making the Rooivalk the equivalent of many dedicated attack helicopters in service in 2000.

As an added note, following the assumption of power by a coalition Liberal/ANC government in 1996, SADF was forced to scrap its own gunship program and acquire Rooivalks for political and budgetary reasons. Since then, the CSH-2 Rooivalk has been used in ID/D roles against Inkatha, PAC and AWB guerrillas.

***Tr Mov:* 1076**
***Com Mov:* 27**
***Fuel Cap:* 1500**
***Fuel Cons:* 1750 (maximum range 741 km)**


The Final Lords of the stars will be born of man. But they won't be in his image.
Vampire
FLEETS
THE VIRUS SOURCEBOOK
Science Fiction Roleplaying Game
TRAVELLER
The New Era
GDW
GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP


PLAYLAND
A Traveller: The New Era adventure
by Harold D. Hale
Art by Kirk E. Wescom

A rescue mission. Not what I signed up to do, but I guess it falls under 'other duties as assigned.' The company can't afford to lose a starship, so off we go into the Stellar Wilderness to find out what happened to them.

This adventure is designed to take place in the HubWorlds, a pocket empire detailed in **Traveller: The New Era**, but could also be used with a minimum amount of conversion in the Star Vikings setting or other settings in the Wilds.

The PCs find themselves in the offices of MHS Limited, a freight hauling and salvage company located on Kaggushus. They are given the assignment of finding the *Devlinaar*, a modified 200-ton far trader, which is owned by MHS and has been declared missing after being overdue for several weeks. The player characters begin the adventure as employees of MHS (or optionally as independent contractors or HubWorld Naval Scouts assigned to help MHS find its missing ship). To find the *Devlinaar*, they will have to retrace its path to its intended destination, the Clausen System. This will take the PCs into what has been up until now, for them, virtually unexplored space.

MEETING

The PCs are lead into the office of Jon Hriana, president of MHS Limited. Hriana started MHS Limited 10 years ago with a salvaged far trader that was sold to him through a government loan program. Through hard work, and a good business sense, he has built the company into one of the most important privately owned interstellar transportation concerns in the HubWorlds. He controls a fleet of around a dozen starships of various sizes which ply the space lanes between Kaggushus and all the other HubWorld members and client states. Last year, Hriana decided to diversify his company's interests into the lucrative (and potentially risky) field of salvaging and recovering old Imperial equipment. The first mission yielded a large find in the Aagkhuur System, which was recovered at enormous profit. Several subsequent expeditions into the same region were not as profitable, however, so it was recently decided to send an expedition into the rimward region of the Ershur Subsector to determine what could be found there.

Hriana's office looks more like a museum than an executive's office, decorated with all sort of recovered Imperial relics, most of which are nice to look at, but no longer functional (among them a suit of TL15 battledress, complete with an FGMP-15, standing in one corner as if at attention). Hriana is a friendly, outgoing man and will greet the PCs with a handshake and offer them refreshments. The PCs' mission is easier said than done: find the *Devlinaar* and its crew, and, if possible, return them to Kaggushus. Hriana believes in taking care of his employees, and as he briefs the PCs on their mission, will express more concern about the crew of the *Devlinaar* than about the fate of the *Devlinaar* itself. He also will inform the PCs of the *Devlinaar*'s flight plan, intelligence on the systems likely visited by the ship (most this intelligence will be rumors, much of the rest speculation), and brief background profiles on the ship's crew. One of the PCs (which one is at the referee's discretion), will be all too familiar with one particular crewmember, Jasin Anacreon, who is the PC's half-brother (this should be used to help motivate the PCs to find the missing ship). Hriana will then introduce Katrin Neeley, the company's chief of starship scheduling and operations, who will brief the PCs on all other relevant details.

KATRIN NEELEY

Katrin Neeley is an extremely efficient, no nonsense bureaucrat who excels at scheduling and planning. In fact, Hriana gives much of the credit for the recent successes of MHS Limited to Neeley's superior abilities in the Starship Scheduling and Operations Department. Neeley is also a dynamic speaker, who will come across to the PCs as someone who puts up with very little, and demands respect at all times.

Neeley has become convinced through circumstantial evidence that the crew of the *Devlinaar* has defected to the pirate band operating out of the Ticularosta System. She is particularly distrustful of the captain, Kevin Daeman, with whom she has had more than one confrontation (this is emphasized in her briefing). Daeman was known to have contacts with individuals involved with the local black market, as well as free traders (some of dubious reputation) who operate outside the HubWorld's borders.

After her briefing, Neeley will once again leave the PCs alone with Hriana. If the PCs are independent contractors, he will negotiate a price for their services; they will find him to be an extremely tough negotiator.

Hriana will then tell the PCs that Neeley will be going along with them on the investigation. He reasons are two fold: first, he believes that her skills as an investigator will help the PCs in their effort (she does possess knowledge in that area). Second, and most importantly, he hopes that she will gain some insight into the day-to-day functioning of a starship, and therefore be more sympathetic toward the people who make up a starship's crew. Hriana spent a hitch on a trader before he went to college (he served as a communications specialist) and feels the experience was invaluable. He wants Neeley to benefit from similar experience. Though rather unenthusiastic about the mission at first (she doesn't care for space travel), the evidence she has found against Daeman has increased her resolve to track him down.

Because Neeley is so highly prized by Hriana for her skills as a scheduler and planner (and potential successor as head of MHS), he will offer to pay the PCs Cr250,000 if she is safely returned. If the PCs accept, they become personally responsible for her safety. Hriana is well aware that Neeley has a certain irritating quality to her personality (which he hopes will mellow with time), but expects her to return unharmed. If she does not, Hriana will likely become so angry that the PCs will likely find themselves the object of a murder investigation, even if her death was an accident (his money usually buys him what he wants, including the ear of the local prosecutor's office).

PREPARATIONS

A check of the local pubs around the starport will reveal that Captain Daeman did indeed hang around some "seedy" characters (some of them Korhites), but the PCs will find no evidence that he performed any illegal acts (the same is also true of the PC's half-brother, Jasin Anacreon, and the rest of the *Devlinaar*'s crew). Those PCs who have Investigation or Streetwise skill (Average, 3D6 hours) will also uncover a close personal friend of Captain Daeman who will reveal that he and Katrin Neeley had a torrid love affair that did not end on friendly terms. Neeley would not be pleased if that information became public knowledge (after all, it would make her look unprofessional). How the PCs use this information is up to their discretion.

The PCs can then make any preparations they deem necessary before departing. MHS will provide any additional equipment they might need (within reason and tech level restrictions; Kaggushus has a tech level of 12),

Clausen System

The Clausen System consists of a binary pair of stars and seven major bodies, four of which are gas giants.

Orbit	*Name*	*UWP*	*Remarks*
Primary	Alpha Ishkumdagi	K1 V	
Companion	Beta Ishkumdagi	M7 D	Close orbit
0		Empty orbit	
1	Kheken	Y-200-000-0	
2	**Clausen**	X-456-000-0	Mainworld, Imperial Ruins
3	Empty Orbit		
4	Kulliekgaan	Y-410-000-0	
20	Iish	Y-S00-000-0	
5	Ashdarimlu	SGG	
02	Ring System	Y-R00-000-0	
09	Iish	Y-300-000-0	
12	Rashurii	Y-853-000-0	Ice-Capped, Imperial Ruins
15	Arkum	Y-410-000-0	
17	Aam	Y-S00-000-0	
6	Miimakishilanam	SGG	
03	Ring System	Y-R00-000-0	
07	Pin	Y-S00-000-0	
14	Akisherur	Y-3A1-000-0	Ammonia Ice-Capped, Imperial Ruins
20	Delalin	Y-211-000-0	Ice-Capped
25	Arkirir	Y-100-000-0	
30	Murluran	Y-S00-000-0	
35	Luugur	Y-S00-000-0	
7	Dukisunmepardu	SGG	
02	Ring System	Y-R00-000-0	
04	Shudun	Y-S00-000-0	
12	Darshim	Y-310-000-0	
25	Irranagin	Y-610-000-0	
40	Ligmar	Y-100-000-0	
8	Ekhukuurdisha	SGG	
05	Irdagi	Y-210-000-0	
10	Siishka	Y-100-000-0	

though weapons will be unavailable due to local restrictions (the law level on Kaggushus is B). The PCs may alternatively request a voucher to purchase weapons in another system, a request that will be approved if the amount requested is reasonable (referee's discretion).

DEPARTURE

The PCs' trip out of the HubWorlds is uneventful, with the exception of Neeley's presence, which could potentially put more than one PC in a foul mood. (PCs who are strict followers of procedure, and of infinite patience, will find that they get along fine with Neeley; those who think the procedures manual is a nice guideline but meant to be interpreted loosely, like probably most of the PCs, will find her a constant grate on their nerves, as she will record any transgressions she witnesses of company policy on a hand computer which she carries with her at all times.) Though Neeley is a wizard at scheduling the comings and goings of starships, she knows absolutely nothing about the actual running of one. That fact will not stop her from trying to tell everyone onboard how to do their job, especially if she perceives they are doing something wrong. Eventually, her wrath will settle on the captain (after all, the captain tolerates the crew's seemingly insubordinate behavior), whom she will try to follow everywhere. Fortunately for the sanity of the captain, the fresher only seats one.

THE SEARCH IS ON

I've seen planets devastated by the Virus before. That still doesn't make seeing another one any easier. So much death and destruction. This whole expedition is starting to give me the creeps. I can't explain why just yet. I just know that the hair on the back of my neck won't lay down. Neeley has been much quieter since we took her planet-side in the last system.

The *Devlinaar*'s route was to take it through the Yadro System, the Selenopod System, the Cronsis System and the Cluseret System before arriving in the Clausen System. Those systems are described in brief below:

Yadro (0306): Yadro only became a client state of the HubWorlds within the past five years. Many commercial starships register this client state as their port so as to sidestep HubWorlds regulations (Yadro has no commercial starship regulations beyond simple registration of the ship. The *Devlinaar* calls this place its home port, as do most of MHS Limited's other starships). Plans are being implemented by the HubWorlds government to upgrade the starport facilities here in hopes of opening up the system to even more commercial traffic, and a number of development projects are underway to improve the quality of life (and raise the tech level) of the world.

Selenopod (0308): Before the Collapse, Selenopod had virtually no permanent population (only the starport supervisor was a permanent resident). The rest of the people present were employees of a local mining concern that rotated its employees back home every three months. A Virus attack destroyed the class-B starport here, and the survivors of the attack have long since died or fled the system. Today Selenopod is barren, lifeless world, with only shattered ruins to remind anyone that humans ever lived here.

Cronsis (0309): Cronsis is a water world that, just prior to the Rebellion, had a state-of-the-art weather control system installed to bring the planet's ferocious storms under control. That system was eventually taken over by a Hobbyist Virus during the later stages of the Collapse, and now it experiments with the planet's weather and records the results. The planet's entire population, decedents of the technicians who ran the system and the decedents of the small number of original inhabitants, live on an island in an archipelago located in the planet's northern tropical zone. So far, the Virus' experiments haven't killed any of the inhabitants, but recently it has taken to creating hurricanes (some with winds over 200 mph), any one of which could have wiped out the colony had they struck the island.

Cluseret (0510): Though it was cut off from outside contact for a time when

its class-B starport was destroyed by a Virus attack, Cluseret's population survived because of the world's habitability. The population recently surpassed pre-Collapse levels, and the visit by the occasional free trader has made the population hungry for more off-world goods.

RUMORS

The following rumors will be picked up by the PCs while en route if they make planetfall on an inhabited world. (It is up to the referee to determine if the PCs will have to pay for this information):

1. "The class-B starport on Selenopod is still intact, but there's no one to run the thing."

2. "The *Devlinaar*? I heard it was captured by pirates and taken to the Ticularosta System."

3. "I hear that Cronsis is a dead world, haunted by the ghosts of its former inhabitants."

4. "I've heard tell that a ship matching the *Devlinaar*'s description was last spotted in the Cronsis System."

5. "A contact of mine indicated that the Clausen System was barren, with not so much as a microbe left alive on any planet."

6. "I spotted that ship several weeks ago while I was refueling my ship outsystem. They refueled too and headed on their way."

7. "I talked with some Korhites a few years ago about Clausen, and they said the area around the starport and the old naval base was so radioactive that your hair will fall out just scanning the place."

CLAUSEN SYSTEM

Clausen, originally called Gankhiren by the Vilani, was renamed during the early days of the Third Imperium in honor of Admiral Conor Clausen, a war hero of considerable reputation in his day. It was the site of a large naval base for many years prior to the Rebellion and a stopover point for many naval vessels as they travelled to and from points further rimward to the depot in the Color System and Capital. There was also a class-A starport, operated by government contractors from Kaggushus, that provided merchants or other civilian starfaring types with a place to rest, refit and resupply during their travels. Government subsidized fuel, food and other basic necessities were sold at the starport, and both major and minor starship repairs could be performed if required at reasonable rates. The Scout Service also had a presence here, since the only x-boat route for the entire subsector passed through this system. At its height prior to the Rebellion (c. 1109), literally tens of thousands of naval personnel and civilians could be on Clausen at any given moment, either on shore leave, assigned to or visiting the starport, or serving at the naval base. There were only two "permanent" residence of the planet: the facilities administrator and her husband (in 1116, just prior the the Rebellion, this "permanent" population of the planet doubled when the facilities administrator had twin sons).

When the Rebellion broke out, the naval presence on Clausen immediately began to dwindle, and with the Solomani invasion, it almost disappeared altogether. Naval vessels still passed through, but unless they needed critical repairs, they refueled and moved on rather quickly. Soon, only a skeleton crew remained at the naval base. Merchant traffic also slowed down, so that by the later stages of the Rebellion, it too was almost nonexistent. Only the Scout Service was still a regular visitor to the installations on Clausen, and made good use of the recreational facilities for its overworked personnel. That continued presence was never large enough, however, to substitute for the loss of business experienced by the government contractors, and the expense of keeping all the facilities operational. In 1124, all facilities not being utilized by the Scout Service were shut down. Also that year, Clausen went from being a link in the x-boat route to being on the frontier, as Lucan's Imperium continued to shrink. By 1129, Lucan's government in cooperation with authorities on Kaggushus drew up plans for the final closure of all the facilities in the Clausen System, and the relocation of all transportable equipment to the Core Sector. Before these plans could be enacted however, the Virus struck.

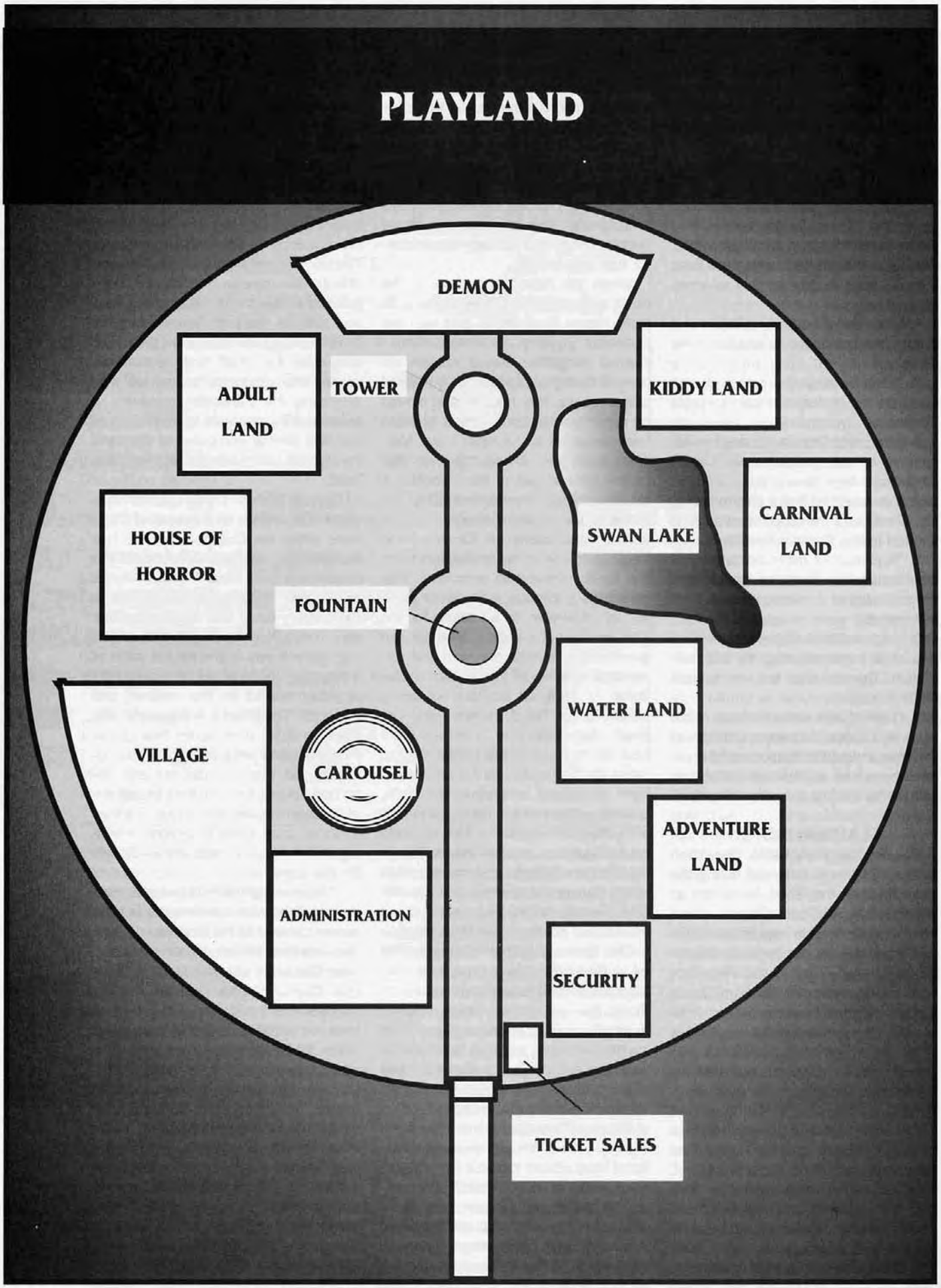
The Virus was carried into the system by a Scout Service x-boat, and was transferred to Clausen itself aboard a Scout Service shuttle, which was to drop off supplies to the surface. That shuttle promptly crashed itself into a large fuel storage facility near the naval base, and the subsequent fires destroyed the entire ground based portion of the naval base (automated fire fighting equipment refused to work). Additional Virus attacks took out the orbitable naval bases facilities and did major damage to the starport. Survivors of these attacks attempted to evacuate the planet in several surviving starships, but these promptly did a nose dive back into the starport facilities just after takeoff, destroying most of what was left of the starport complex. The entire first wave of Virus attacks took just under two days and killed everyone on the planet.

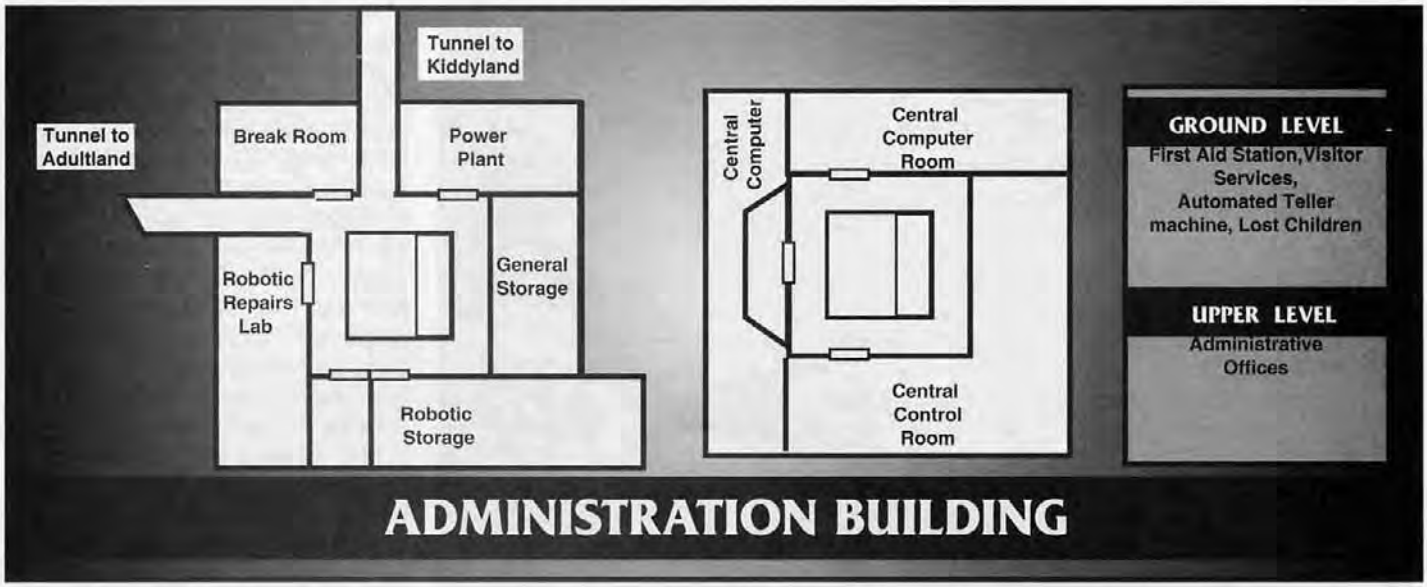
Ten years later, another strain of the Virus made it way to Clausen, this time carried by a vampire ship. The Virus aboard the vampire ship transmitted a copy of itself (a "child") to the one surviving operational automated transmitter/receiver left on Clausen, which was linked to a computer which advertised the existence of Playland to visitors of Clausen through an interactive program. Though the transfer process eventually resulted in the "child" Virus losing contact with its "parent" (in rewriting the programming of the computer, the "child" took over; the "child" had inadvertently erased the programs concerned with operating the transmitter/receiver), it subsequently managed to worm its way into the central computer of Playland through the computer net, and establish itself.

Current Status: Though pirates have visited the system on a couple of occasions since the Collapse, no one has explored the extensive ruins where the naval base and class-A starport once stood. After doing a preliminary scan of the primary naval and starport facilities and seeing how thoroughly devastated they were, it was easier for the crew of a passing ship to conclude that nothing of value existed on the surface and move on. There were two reasons why Playland didn't show up on their scans: First, Playland was no longer broadcasting its greeting (for reasons described above); second, the atmosphere of Clausen causes anomalous readings to show up on a ship's sensors (detecting that there is a problem is Difficult: Sensor Ops).

The sensor operators of previous ships did not detect the interference, but the sensor operator of the *Devlinaar* did, and she asked permission to have the *Devlinaar* enter Clausen's atmosphere for a closer look. Captain Daeman agreed, and the ship flew over the location of the old naval base and starport facilities. On the outskirts of one the lesser damaged sections of the starport, they found Playland, and Captain Daeman ordered the ship to land. (Old Imperial star charts of the Clausen System would indicate this anomaly and would have instructions for fine-tuning the sensors so that the interference could be nullified; a "remnant" spacefarer who worked in this subsector would also be aware of the problem and may even be able to make the sensor adjustments, with the proper skill.)

Adjusting the sensors to compensate


PLAYLAND
DEMON
ADULT LAND
TOWER
KIDDY LAND
HOUSE OF HORROR
SWAN LAKE
CARNIVAL LAND
FOUNTAIN
WATER LAND
VILLAGE
CAROUSEL
ADVENTURE LAND
ADMINISTRATION
SECURITY
TICKET SALES



for the atmospheric interference will take several hours (Difficult: Sensors, 2D6 hours). Whether the PCs discover the atmospheric anomaly problem and make the necessary compensations, or decide to enter Clausen's atmosphere anyway and do a close up "eyeball" scan (which will make the search take much longer), they will eventually discover the location of the *Devlinaar*.

WELCOME TO PLAYLAND

The *Devlinaar* will be found parked near the entrance of Playland's dome. The hatches on the ship will all be closed (Neeley has the security codes to open them), and no one will be on or around the ship. A search of the ship and a check of the ship's logs will reveal that the last person left the vessel three days ago and was apparently headed to the park to help with a survey by orders of the captain. Nothing else will be found out of the ordinary. If the PCs are somewhat reluctant to attempt to enter the park, Neeley will insist that a search be conducted for the crew of the *Devlinaar*, and will attempt to enter the park if no PC wants to try. She will also insist on accompanying any search party that goes into the park. (The referee should feel free to have Neeley question the bravery and or the manhood/womanhood of any PCs who don't accompany her into the park should she be faced with going in alone.)

Playland was constructed by a government contractor from Kaggushus in 1077 for the use and entertainment of naval and scout personnel, merchants and their families while they were in-system. It is a TL13 entertainment complex encased in a pressurized dome. Over the years, the park has been upgraded, and now it contains an extensive collection of TL15 robots, holographic equipment, and computer hardware and software. Playland was initially an open-air facility, with unpressurized buildings housing most of the attractions to provide a degree of weather proofing during this region of Clausen's mild rainy winters. Eventually, the pressurized dome was added to provide better overall weather protection and to compensate for Clausen's thin (but breathable) atmosphere.

Inside the dome are two picnic areas and a number of buildings of various sizes, both large and small. Each of the large buildings (called "theme buildings" because all the entertainment within them is based on a particular theme) houses a number of games, attractions, shows and rides. The largest ride is The Demon, a TL15 roller coaster, which takes up an entire building in the back of the park.

Some small buildings contain booths which feature a single game or attraction, while others contain places where food can be purchased. Many of the food buildings still have edible food and drinks, a tribute (?) to the amount of preservatives that could be found in typical Imperial fast food.

Playland was designed to be nearly self-operating, so that only a minimal number of people would be necessary to run it (this reduces operating costs, since robots don't need paid vacations or other such benefits). Robots are used to prepare and serve food, patrol the park for trash, make repairs, provide security, perform first-aid, and run the games and rides (in some cases, like The Demon, the ride *is* a robot, capable of running itself with only robot attendants necessary to make sure everyone gets on and off safely).

VIRUS

The Virus was mutated by its trip into the central computer. Instead of seeking out human enemies and destroying them, as its "parent" Vampire ship did, this Virus attempts to attract humans to it (the influence of the interactive program where it first entered the Playland computer net, entertain them (reflecting the strong influence of the programming it found in the Playland computer net), then torture and kill them (it is unfortunately criminally insane). It will resort to almost any tactic short of threatening the PCs to draw them into the park.

ENTERING THE PARK

The PCs can attempt to enter the park in several ways. First, the PCs can purchase a ticket at the ticket booth with Imperial credits, cost Cr15 per person. It is unlikely that the PCs will have Imperial credits (those became worthless after the Collapse), but if they take time to do some salvage work in the nearby ruins of the starport (Average: Salvage, 2 hours), they would find a sufficient quantity of Imperial credits to pay their admission. A standard Imperial debit card with sufficient credit would also suffice, but would also have to be found in the ruins (Difficult: Salvage, 12 hours). The PCs could try sneaking into the park, but that will prove impossible through the front entrance, as park robots patrol the entrance at all times (any PC capable of performing the "impossible" will get about five yards into park and be greeted by park security robots identical to the security robots found in **Traveller: The New Era** (some of these will have ACRs as their armament instead of the standard configuration) who will escort them to the administrative

Jasin Anacreon

768863-0-6, age 26 (2 terms).

Initiative: 3.

Title: 3rd Officer (Chief Engineer) of the *Devlinaar.*

Skills: Ship's Engineering-5, Carousing-2, Climbing-2, Leadership-2, Machinist-2, Mechanic-2, Slug Rifle-2, Streetwise-2, Unarmed Martial Arts-2, Environment Suit-1, Pilot (Grav/Interface)-1, Slug Pistol-1, Survival-1, Zero-G Environment-1, Computer-0, Willpower-0.

Motivation: *Heart 3:* Jasin is friendly and gets along well with others. He has gained a bit of a reputation as being a bit roguish, though he is less so now than he used to be. He is well liked by his fellow shipmates and by Captain Daeman.

Spade 5: When Jasin was younger, he was a directionless youth who showed some aptitude with things mechanical. Life as a trader has given him direction, and he plans one day to be the chief engineer on a large starship, or maybe even own one of his own.

Kevin Daeman

7B896A-0-5, age 37 (5 terms).

Initiative: 5.

Title: Captain of the *Devlinaar.*

Skills: Pilot (I/G)-9, Slug Pistol-6, Astrogation-3, Bargain-3, Carousing-3, Leadership-3, Ship's Tactics-2, Streetwise-2, Survival-2, Thrown Weapons-2, Unarmed Martial Arts-2, Admin/Legal-1, Communications-1, Environment Suit-1, Gunnery (Energy Weapons)-1, Intrusion-1, Liaison-1, Marketing-1, Sensors-1, Ship's Engineering-1, Willpower-1.

Motivation: *Diamond Queen:* Captain Daeman is obsessed with conquering women. Though he will not resort to violence, he will do or say almost anything to achieve his goal of conquest. Once that has been accomplished, he will move on to a new "target." This has gotten him into serious trouble in the past, and once nearly got him killed by a jealous lover.

Club 3: Captain Daeman has seen a lot of violence and is not intimidated by it. He is at least a good shot with his auto snub pistol and has fired it in anger more than once.

Jon Hriana

578BBA-0-B, age 61 (11 terms).

Initiative: 5.

Title: President and founder of MHS Limited.

Skills: Admin/Legal-12, Unarmed Martial Arts-8, Marketing-7, Bargain-5, Leadership-5, History-4, Liaison-4, Armed Martial Arts-3, Communications-3, Environ Suit-3, Starship Architecture-3, Willpower-3, Biology (Botany)-2, Computer-2, Pilot (I/G)-2, Persuasion-2, Slug Pistol-2, Streetwise-2, Willpower-2, Bribery-1, Carousing-1, Electronics-1, Intrusion-1, Language (Vilani)-1, Map-1, Psychology-1, Research-1, Swimming-1, Zero G Environ-1.

Motivation: *Heart King:* Hriana is an extremely honorable man and usually conducts his business with a handshake. His personal honesty has earned his company a reputation throughout the HubWorlds as one that you can trust to haul your cargo; that has resulted in Hriana's company being an outstanding success.

Heart Jack: Hriana is now starting to get on in years. Once he was extremely ambitious, but now has all the power and wealth he ever wanted. He wishes to pass on what he has learned to others, which is why he has taken on Neeley as a protege. He will give good advice to the PCs if they ask.

Katrin Neeley

697AA6-0-9, age 33 (4 terms).

Initiative: 6.

Title: Chief of Starship Scheduling and Operations, MHS Limited.

Skills: Admin/Legal-10, Computer-6, Marketing-5, Leadership-4, Bargain-2, Observation-2, Painting-2, Persuasion-2, Research-2, Swimming-2, Biology-1, Bribery-1, Enviro Suit-1, Unarmed Martial Arts-1, Willpower-1, Pilot (I/G)-0.

Motivation: *Heart King:* Like Hriana, Neeley holds honor above everything else. She believes that employees are honor bound to follow the regulations of the company to the best of their ability. She takes a dim view of those who break their word and use her power to punish those that do.

Club Queen: Once Neeley has made up her mind, all further discussion is basically fruitless. She sees no benefit doing nothing and will take action (not always the preferred action) if she thinks people are just sitting around. Hriana is working to change this aspect of her personality, and people who show the kind of patience that Hriana does will find her much easier to work with.

center, where they will receive a stern warning from an administrative robot and then be escorted back out of the park. The PCs could also try cutting or blasting their way into the pressurized dome. If so, the PCs will soon find themselves surrounded by 3D6 security robots, who will attempt to subdue the PCs and bring them inside to the administrative center, where they will be held until they are picked up by their parents (or a fellow crew member claiming to be their parents) in the lost children office. A similar firefight will break out if the PCs attempt to shoot their way in (and will result in a "lockdown" of the park, making getting inside impossible without starship weaponry. (Engaging in any kind of gunplay outside the dome will endanger the lives of the crew of the *Devlinaar.*)

Eventually, if the PCs can't come up with the money, several clowns will appear from inside the dome (these are pseudobiological robots, robots which appear to be a living creature). They will perform a show, then present any PCs who stick around for the entire act with a free admission pass. The park rules are printed on the back of the ticket, and include all the rules one would normally associate with an amusement park (including no conspicuous firearms, which means the PCs will be restricted to weapons which are at least marginally concealable).

Once they are in the park, the PCs will find Playland to be a fun place, if they let their guard down a little, though at times it will seem a bit on the incomprehensible or even bizarre side. (A clever bit of imagination is a requirement here; see the NPCs of the Park section for some ideas to get you started.) Much of the entertainment is of the interactive variety, and is usually oriented toward children and adolescents (though some strictly adult-oriented activities exist). Park visitors are able to indulge themselves in activities as diverse as their own tastes (as long as their tastes don't include "real" gun play; see below). Periodically, a park employee (actually another pseudobiological robot dressed as a clown) will come by and ask the PCs how they are enjoying their stay, and give them directions or make suggestions about various popular attractions. The "employee" is not aware of what's become of the starport or the naval base, and will treat the PCs like visiting merchants. If asked, it will tell the PCs that visitors used to come through all the time, and that things have been particularly slow recently because of the Rebellion. He

hopes business will pick up soon, but things don't look good (the "employee" will then confide to the PCs that it thinks management may be getting ready to close the place). If the PCs inquire about the crew of the *Devlinaar*, the PCs will be told that the crew of the *Devlinaar* is scattered in other parts of the park. If the PCs go to the areas the clown describes, no one will be found. This "cat and mouse" game will continue for an several hours, after which, if the PCs continue to investigate, the Virus in the central computer will begin to tire of their constant inquiries and begin to torture the PCs with "sightings" of various *Devlinaar* crewmembers, who will be spotted at a distance or walking around a corner. If the PCs decide to chase after the *Devlinaar* crewmember, the crewmember will disappear before the PCs can catch up.

Eventually, the PCs will catch on to the fact that none of their hosts are "alive," but are all robots. Some don't even "exist," as they are mere holoprojects (especially the larger creatures that roam in some of the theme buildings). The *Devlinaar* crewmembers the PCs keep chasing fit into the holoprojection category. The PCs will also figure out that something called the central computer is actually running everything.

FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES

After a period of 4D6 hours, or anytime the PCs decide to leave the park or decide to start shooting up the place with their real weapons (some of the interactive games include fake weapons that look and behave like the real thing except that they do no real damage), the Virus in central computer will tire of playing with its new "pets" and try to dispose of them. The central computer will do this with all the resources at its disposal, including its mobile physical assets (which include the pseudobiological robots and security and other types of robots), use of trickery through the holoprojection equipment, and use of immobile equipment, such as rides (not a good time to be enjoying the TL15 Demon rollercoaster). Initially, the Virus will try to pick off the PCs one by one in very creative fashions, but will eventually become impatient if unsuccessful and resort to more conventional means (like massed assaults by security robots).

This will leave the PCs with a new objective—survival. The PCs can accomplish this by one of two methods—escaping Playland or disabling the central computer. Escaping should prove difficult but not impossible, as the Virus, after all, doesn't have access to massive firepower (actually, only small arms and some explosives, with one exception as noted below) and would likely let the PCs leave if they were causing too much damage (the Virus wants the park left relatively intact so that it can have its robots clean up and can lure in more visitors). The dome that the park resides in can be exited through the main entrance or through one of several emergency exits (assuming the PCs have Electronics skill to "hotwire" the door or some explosives to blow it open).

NPCS IN THE PARK

There are a number of TL15 pseudobio robots within the park that were designed to emulate the behavior of various characters from both ancient and modern stories. These robots will be active so long as the central computer is operational and they are within contact with it. Contact will be broken if the robots are taken outside the range of their receivers (which is 300 kilometers) or the robot's receiver becomes damaged. Below are just two examples, though many more are possible and are left up to the imagination of the referee.

The Rabbit

A character based on an ancient Terran 2-D cartoon figure from the early to mid-20th century. The Rabbit is bi-pedal, approximately 1.7 meters tall (not counting its ears, which stand straight up), buck toothed, gray and white in coloring, and has an absolute weakness for carrots (which can be exploited by the PCs). The Rabbit will be sent out periodically to talk to the PCs by the Virus in the central computer so that the Virus can gain information about them. It is unarmed, but if threatened, will not hesitate to violently harass the PCs until they beg forgiveness (it may even try to steal the PCs' weapons and use them against the PCs). The Rabbit has access to a large arsenal of explosives (mostly sticks of what appear to be dynamite), which it will use to booby trap various objects (including crude replicas of itself). It can escape pursuit by diving into holes which exist at various locations throughout the park.

FFFF5F-0-5 (apparent strength 6), age ?.

Initiative: 10.

Primary Skills: (All at level 20) Act/Bluff, Carousing, Dance, Disguise, Excavation, Music (keyboard), Painting, Persuasion, Pickpocket, Skates (blade), Song, Streetwise, Swimming, Thrown Weapon, Willpower.

Other Skills: (All at level 6) Admin/Legal, Archaic Artillery, Construction, Early Fire Arms, Electronics, Carpenter, Mason, Ground Vehicle (Wheeled), Riding, Slug Rifle, Small Water Craft, Swimming.

Motivation: *Club 4:* The Rabbit will not hesitate to use force if the situation dictates, and has done so on numerous occasions.

Heart 3: The Rabbit is friendly to most everyone he meets, except the Hunter, with whom he has a running feud.

The Hunter

Also based on a early to mid-20th century Terran 2-D cartoon character, he walks around looking for the Rabbit, but may also be encountered on the trail of a duck, gophers, chipmunks or other similar seemingly harmless creatures that aren't harmless. He will also be sent out to hunt the PCs by the Virus in the central computer toward the end of the PCs' time at Playland. The Hunter is approximately 1.6 meters tall, carries what appears to be a pump shotgun (in actuality, an autoshotgun), and is dressed in mid-20th-century hunting garb (complete with hunter's cap). He talks with what seems to be a slight speech impediment, which may make him difficult for the PCs to understand.

66F562-0-6, age ?.

Initiative: 1.

Skills: (All at level 4) Farming, Guard/Hunting Beasts, Slug Rifle, Stealth, Swimming, Dance, Song, Tracking, Chemistry, Mechanic, Ground Vehicle (Wheeled), Small Watercraft.

Motivation: *Heart 3:* The Hunter is normally friendly to everyone, except small woodland creatures.

Club 6: The Hunter prefers to blow small woodland creatures into small pieces rather than talk things out with them. He will use large quantities explosives to accomplish this, especially if he is angered.

I THOUGHT SHE WAS WITH YOU

At some point after the Virus that inhabits the Central Computer gets bored playing around, and just before it

starts to assault the PCs, the Virus will have a robot kidnap Neeley. An attempt will be made while she is alone, but if the PCs have been "sitting on her" the entire adventure (and for their share of Cr250,000, they are likely to), 3D6 security robots will ambush the PCs and attempt to take her by force. If the robots succeed in capturing Neeley, they will bring her to the administrative center, where she will be held, along with the crew of the *Devlinaar* (assuming any of them are still alive). Her cries for help should be broadcast all over the park if the PCs attempt to leave without her. Eventually, if the PCs aren't completely heartless (after all, not even Neeley deserves to be left in the clutches of whatever has captured her), they will face up to the prospect of having to disable (or destroy) the central computer.

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

The central computer (and therefore the Virus) controls Playland and is located in a large room three levels below the administration building. Neeley and several crewmembers of the *Devlinaar* (again, if alive) are being held on the first basement level, the robot repair lab. They are strapped to the room's repair tables and are guarded by 1D6 security robots. A medical robot will be in the process of preparing to dissect a member of the *Devlinaar's* crew (or Neeley) when the PCs come to the rescue (the particularly maudlin referee will also have a few of the *Devlinaar*'s crew already laying about in various stages of "disassembly" on tables in the room). On the third level protecting the central computer are two pseudobiological robot guards. They wear TL15 battledress identical to that in Hriana's office and carry operational FGMP-15s. They will blast into ashes anything that exits the elevator or otherwise comes into proximity of the central computer. No other security robots will be found in the administrative building, but the Virus has the capability through the central computer to activate monitoring cameras, electronic eyes and various other tracking equipment which allow it to follow all the PCs' movements. It can also electronically lock all doors, release knockout gas into the ventilation systems and call in reinforcements for the security robots in the building if it thinks the threat to itself is large enough.

CENTRAL COMPUTER

Disabling the central computer or its primary power source (a TL13 fusion power plant, also located in the basement of the administrative building on the third level) is possible, but will prove difficult. Here are some options:

Destroy the Central Computer: Since the Virus resides in the central computer, the computer's destruction will also kill the Virus. That will effectively shut down the park (including all robots, rides, etc.). The PCs can then make their way through the complex and search at their leisure. A frontal assault should prove futile against the FGMP-15-equipped robots in the central computer's access room.

Destroy or Disable the Central Computer's Power Source: Disabling the fusion power plant that the central computer is hooked up to in the administrative center will only accomplish the goal temporarily (in fact, the Virus in the central computer may "play dead" long enough to get the PCs out of the administrative center and then attack them). The central computer controls the power nets, and the park was built with several identical power plants (one in each theme building, plus the one in the administrative center) instead of one large power plant, so that the park won't have to shut down for power plant maintenance. It can also draw power from an emergency battery located in the central control room, so that there will be no interruption in power (this battery will provide power at reduced levels (light, heat, basic environment control) to the park for 15 minutes, or just the administration building and the central computer for 12 hours, then will require a recharge). The central computer can draw power from any of these power plants, so all of them would have to be destroyed or disabled before the central computer will be disabled. Initially, the Virus in the central computer will not devote very much in the way of resources to stop the PCs from doing this. As the number of operational power plants declines, however, this will become an increasingly difficult task. Attempting to jury-rig the administrative center's power plant to blow up (and thus take out the central computer) will be unsuccessful, since the Virus in the central computer will immediately inactivate the power plant as soon as the PCs try to access the controls or wiring.

Destroy or Disable the Fuel Processing Facility: Though there are several power plants, they all draw their fuel from two fuel purification plants (one on-line, one backup) which are located under the tower on the village square (they can be reached by means of the tunnel system that runs under the park or through a access hatch near the tower's base). The fuel purification plants draw water from an underground aquifer, purify it, crack it, then pipe the hydrogen fuel created to the power plants. By eliminating the fuel purification plants, the power plants will eventually run out of fuel, and the central computer will eventually shut down (once the battery backup has run down). The Virus in central computer may not realize what the PCs are up to at first (this was not considered a high-security area by the designers), but when it does, it will try to stop them quickly.

Attempt to Contact their Ship: Assuming the PCs left someone back at their ship, they can attempt to establish contact with them and have them try to blast a hole in the park's dome so that the PCs can exit. This attempt will fail, since the Virus in the central computer is capable of monitoring all communications traffic and jamming the band the PCs are using with white noise. At the referee's prerogative, not only will the central computer jam the frequency the PCs are using, but the Virus will also contact the PCs' ship on another frequency and, using a PC's voice, lure the remaining crew away from the vessel (this is what happened to the crew of the *Devlinaar*). The Virus may also attempt to fool the PCs inside the park by contacting them on another frequency and telling them that help is on the way, and telling them to be at some specific coordinates within the park. When the PCs reach the specified coordinates, not only will they not get any help, they will be ambushed by security robots.

Other Options: PCs have an annoying habit of coming up with solutions to problems no one has ever thought of. While the above attempts to list the most common means to get out of the predicament, the referee is advised to be prepared for the worst, and reward PCs for particularly innovative and/or courageous solutions.

LEAVING THE PARK

Once the PCs have escaped, they can then make their way back to their ship. The *Devlinaar* could also be taken, if the PCs have enough qualified crewmembers from their own ship or rescued from the park to operate it. The Virus in the central computer (assuming that it wasn't disabled) will make no further attempt to pursue the PCs.

Just before liftoff, however, Neeley (if she wasn't already recovered) will come wandering up to the ship, dazed but in otherwise apparent good health, with her hand computer still strapped firmly on her wrist. A scan of the hand com-

puter will reveal that no Virus is present. Unknown to her (and the PCs), she carries a computer chip beneath her skin, placed there by the medical robot from the robot repair lab. The PCs will discover this chip on a routine bioscan as a foreign object. Removing it is Difficult: Medicine. A scan of the chip will reveal that it contains a Virus "egg" and some software that will enable the "egg" to be transferred via a low-level transmitter (range five meters) to a larger computer, where it was to expand itself into a copy of the Virus. The Virus hoped the "egg" chip would be transported to a new location, where it could take up residence and gain control of a new computer. If the PCs don't do a routine bioscan, the "egg" on the chip is very likely to attempt to transfer itself to the ship's computer sometime during the voyage back to Kaggushus. Since there are safeguards in place against this, it will not succeed, but as alarms go off everywhere, the PCs will be scrambling to figure out the location of the Virus on their ship.

If the central computer was left operational, any robots the PCs capture will go dead as soon as the PCs' ship is more than 300 kilometers from the park. An examination of the robots will reveal that their "brain" was shorted out long ago and that they operate via a "slave" unit linked by radio to the central computer. Once the robots leave the range of the central computer's transmitter (or the central computer is disabled), they are incapable of functioning.

VOYAGE OF THE *DEVLINAAR*

Here then is the story of the *Devlinaar* and its crew, from the time the ship left Kaggushus until the PCs found it on Clausen. The PCs should be able to piece this together from the *Devlinaar*'s logs or by interviewing members of the *Devlinaar*'s crew.

All was pretty much routine up to the point that the ship jumped into the Selenopod System. That's when the maneuver drive system started malfunctioning. Though Anacreon was able to juryrig it together enough to enable the ship to move (just barely), Captain Daeman thought it best to take advantage of his "free trader" (actually Korhites, who he is trying to convince to go legitimate) contacts and jump to the Ticularosta System. There, the *Devlinaar* had its maneuver drive repaired (either with stolen HubWorlds parts or salvaged Imperial ones; an inspection of the ship will reveal which), and the ship was back on course for the Clausen System. Once they arrived in the Clausen System, the crew of the *Devlinaar* ran into the sensor problems described previously, but through a bit of luck, found Playland while conducting a low-level sweep of the ruins of the naval base and starport. They didn't have Imperial credits either, but after a bit of salvaging, they found enough money to send a survey team into the park. After the survey team was late in reporting back from the park, a search team, led by the captain, went in with free passes given to them by the Virus' clowns. An hour later, the captain (actually the Virus impersonating the captain) called back to the ship to report that everything was fine, that the survey party had been found and that additional crewmembers would be required to help with the survey. Eventually, the rest of the crew was lured off the ship and into the park by the Virus.

As has been previously alluded to, whether or not Jasin Anacreon, or any of his comrades, will be found dead, or alive and being held captive, is left up to the mercy of the referee. If they are found alive and can be rescued, they will be of great assistance to the PCs in getting the *Devlinaar* back home.

REWARD

Once the PCs arrive back at Kaggushus, how they are rewarded depends entirely on what or who they bring back with them.

If they make it back with only their hides intact, without Neeley or any of the crew of the *Devlinaar*, or the *Devlinaar* itself, they will be greeted warmly by the HubWorlds government for bringing back the information on the existence of Playland (the HubWorld government will then dispatch several warships to quarantine the system until scientific teams can move in to salvage what's left of the facility). They will also receive a nice medal for their valiant service, public acclaim as heroes, payment for the services in discovering the whereabouts of the missing ship (if that applies), and after the excitement of the event has worn off, will be charged with Neeley's murder. They will eventually be cleared of the charges because of lack of evidence, but their reputation will be ruined, and they'll probably have trouble finding employment again. (If Neeley was killed, but members of the *Devlinaar* crew were rescued, Hriana will be saddened by the loss of Neeley, but happy that at least some of the *Devlinaar*'s crew were brought back alive, and will take no action against the PCs—it is unlikely, though, that Hriana will send them on anything else other than the most mundane and routine of assignments ever again.)

If they return with Neeley, but without the *Devlinaar* or its crew, the PCs will be rewarded as described above (without the murder charge) and will receive payment by Hriana as promised. They will also likely be sent back by either the HubWorlds government or by Hriana on a mission to recover the *Devlinaar* at a later date.

If they return with Neeley *and* any of the crew of the *Devlinaar* (or Neeley and the *Devlinaar* itself without the crew), they will be rewarded as above, and also receive a hefty bonus. They will become known as people you send out on the really tough assignments, and they'll get a lot of them in the coming years.

If the PCs make it back with Neeley, at least one of the *Devlinaar*'s crew members and the *Devlinaar*, they will be rewarded by Hriana and the HubWorlds government as described above, and will be offered a job by Hriana leading a company expedition to Clausen to salvage the Imperial artifacts there. The job offer will come with a hefty salary, a percentage of the revenues generated from the salvage, and the use of a ship larger than the PCs currently operate so long as they are employees of MHS Limited. If they turn down his offer of employment (and if the PCs are government employees they may be forced to by HubWorlds law), they will be approached by the HubWorlds government, who will want them to lead an expedition back to Clausen, and will provide them with a much larger ship and rank in the HubWorlds Navy to go along with their new vessel.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Much of the feel of this adventure depends upon the referee. This can be a silly , fun-filled, relaxing scenario, or a deadly serious twisted nightmare, or some combination in between. In the end, the PCs will have been given a glimpse of what the Imperium was like before the Collapse. This may spur them into putting even more effort into helping with the recovery of the HubWorlds to its full Imperial splendor, or will make the PCs glad that such days are now long gone. Either way, this adventure can serve as a one-shot scenario, or as a jumpoff point for an entire HubWorlds campaign, as the PCs go deeper and deeper into the Wilds searching for more Imperial ruins which will prove as rich in artifacts as Clausen. Ω

Gen
Ent
Lib
Com
Gov
Nav
Mil
Security Clearance
Yes No
Security Card

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
RC NAVY HEADQUARTERS, AURORA (0535/AUBAINE, B576646-B), 8/II/1202
KEYWORDS: **RCN, SHENK, STARFARING ORGANIZATIONS**

Unofficial RCN sources confirm rumors that there is a starfaring organization operating somewhere in the Shenk subsector, immediately to coreward of the Oriflamme subsector. Indications are that this organization is a human government, rather than a vampire fleet, although such assessments are only tentative.

Details of the size or extent of operations of this group are not available, but it is known that they operate in the Shenk Rimward Main, and have been observed to operate starships in the 30,000 displacement ton range, significantly larger than any starships operated by the Reformation Coalition. The operations that have been observed are not consistent with either Free Trader or Mercantile Guild activities, as these new activities are much more extensive.

It is not known at this time whether or not this organization presents a threat to the Coalition, although the characteristics of their shipping indicate that the potential is there.

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **ENT/GEN**, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
BRUSMAN CULTURAL CENTER, BRUSMAN, AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 19/II/1202
KEYWORDS: **ART, CATS (*FELIS FAMILIARIS*), INTER-SPECIES MORPHIC RESONANCE**

Today saw the long-awaited opening of the exhibition "Why Cats Paint: A theory of feline aesthetics" in the newly renovated Bridget Wing of the Brusman Cultural Center.

"Why Cats Paint" is a lavish celebration of the largely unappreciated aesthetic sensibilities of cats, and is described by its organizers as also functioning as an experiment in inter-species morphic resonance and formative causation.

In addition to paintings by acknowledged masters Tiger, Bootsie, Misty, Lu Lu and Wong Wong, the exhibition features works of sculpture and cat performance art, the first of its kind to see public exhibition. The centerpiece of the show is the magnificent *Breakfast*, commissioned specifically for this show from Tiger, leader of the spontaneous reductionist school.

Show organizers Heather Bush and Burton Silver were on hand for the gala reception, along with two of the featured artists, duo painters Lu Lu and Wong Wong.

"Why Cats Paint: A theory of feline aesthetics" will remain open in the Brusman Cultural Center's Bridget Wing through the end of Capricorn.

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CDORE S. LATHROP
RCS *THUNDERCHILD*, IN ORBIT, MARAX (0726/THOEZENNT, D57366D-6), 22/II/1202
KEYWORDS: **MARAX, DLS *HORUS*, RESCUE MISSION, DECAPITATION STRIKE, RCMC**

A combined Reformation Coalition force under the command of Commodore Sean "Hammer" Lathrop has chalked up another conspicuous success here on Marax, rescuing the 12 imprisoned crew of the Dawn League trader DLS *Horus*, held in captivity for more than a year by TED Ushugaam II. *Horus* was one of the original 12 ill-fated "trading scouts" dispatched in 1199 on exploration missions from which none of them would return. *Horus* was declared overdue on 3/XII/1199.

RC intelligence services received information from unspecified sources that the *Horus* crew, under Captain Julianne Einhatta, were being held by Ushugaam's forces in an underground stronghold in the "Cleft Bagvoot," a system of rift valleys in the high desert of Marax. The stronghold is the pre-Collapse headquarters of the Marax planetary defense system, and was heavily defended by batteries of TL10 planetary defense missiles. Due to the deep subterranean location of the Cleft Bagvoot stronghold, it could not be attacked directly from orbit, but could only be assaulted by troops on the ground in the valley itself.

This required a daring assault spearheaded by drop troops who neutralized the missile batteries, paving the way for the landing of heavy reinforcements from orbit. The force included units from the Reformation Coalition Navy, Reformation Coalition Marine Corps, Oriflammen Marine Corps, Nimban Army, plus Free-Lancers and volunteers from Baldur, organized as Task Force Strike Marax.

The task force consisted of three companies of troops plus an engineer platoon and RCN orbital support commanded from task force flagship *Thunderchild*, Captain Pat Ritter commanding.

The RC forces were faced by elements of three battalions of Marax troops, equipped to tech level 9 or 10. The initial RC lodgement was seriously threatened by the arrival of relic heavy armored vehicles of the "Abomination" design. These fission-powered behemoths were impervious to the drop troops' weaponry, and had eventually to be destroyed by orbital missile fire.

The attack was ultimately successful, resulting in the clearing of the stronghold and the rescue of all 12 *Horus* crewmembers. The TED Ushugaam is also believed to have been killed in the action.

The commanding officer of the System Naval Forces (COSYSNAVFOR) Captain Pat "Who Me?" Ritter, described it as, "a textbook operation. It's right there in the first chapter, under 'Goat Rodeos: How to Organize Them for Fun and Profit.'"

With the recovery of *Horus*' crew, nine of the 12 Dawn League traders are now thought to be accounted for. The fates of traders *Dämmerlicht*, *Dawn* and *Reine Soleil* are still unknown.

RCN MIL TRAFFIC, CLASS: **PUBINFO**, DISTRIBUTION: **UNLTD**, AUTHORITY COMMANDER, RCN
RC NAVY HEADQUARTERS, AURORA (0535/AUBAINE, B576646-B), 25/II/1202
KEYWORDS: **RCN, SHENK, STARFARING ORGANIZATIONS, MISSING SHIP**

The Commander, Reformation Coalition Navy regrets to announce that the Reformation Coalition Ship *Marathon Victrix* (TAILNO 10050) is missing and presumed lost in routine operations in the Shenk subsector. *Marathon Victrix* is a sloop of the *Victrix* class, displacing 400 tons and carrying a crew of 26. She was completed at Trybec and was employed primarily in frontier patrol duties.

The navy is unable to confirm or deny whether the loss has any connection with the speculated existence of a foreign starfaring power operating in the Shenk subsector, but is undertaking an inquiry to establish the cause of the ship's disappearance. RCN and RCES vessels operating in the subsector have been ordered to operate at a higher level of vigilance for the duration of this inquiry.

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/AURORA
CIN OFFICES, AURORA (0535/AUBAINE, B576646-B), 25/II/1202
KEYWORDS: **RCN, SHENK, MISSING SHIP, SHIP DEPLOYMENTS**

RCN forces are operating at a high level of readiness following the announcement earlier this afternoon of the loss of RCS *Marathon Victrix* in the Shenk subsector. All leaves have been cancelled for RCN ships in the Aurora system, and it is expected that all naval vessels present will put to space while they are fully crewed.

Expected to depart are the sloops *Coral Sea Victrix*, *Riggins Victrix*, *Kelley Victrix*, and the clippers *Aurora* and *Apollo*. Their destination is presumed to be the Shenk Rimward Main, via Eos, Ra and Fisher's World.



The sloop RCS *Kelley Victrix*

RCN MIL TRAFFIC, CLASS: **PUBINFO**, DISTRIBUTION: **UNLTD**, AUTHORITY COMMANDER, RANAVACT
RA NAVAL ACTIVITIES OFFICES, RA (0931/ORIFLAMME, E68659A-6), 8/III/1202
KEYWORDS: **RCN, SHENK, STARFARING ORGANIZATIONS, MISSING SHIP, SOLEE**

The following message was delivered to RCN forces operating in the Shenk subsector:

"In the name of The Empress Solee, the Christen Overtak, Her Brilliant Majesty Gabriella Ramstattan, I, Amaraan Abas, The Voice of Solee, declare to you Her most grave displeasure at your activities in the territory of the Soleean Empire.

"The surviving crew of your starcraft *Marathon Victorious* are being held for crimes against the person, lands, chattel and interests of The Empress Solee, for which the penalties are death. However, it is Her Brilliant Majesty's pleasure to commute these sentences to life imprisonment at hard labor, pending the payment of reparations by your Reformed Coalition.

"We expect the most rapid compliance with this generous offer."

The message has been forwarded to the highest levels of the RC government. RCN throughout the Thoezennt, Shenk, Aubaine and Oriflamme subsectors are being placed on the highest level of alert.

A Blighted Land

A prequel to the adventure campaign and sourcebook Vampire Fleets.

By Frank Chadwick

This stand-alone adventure comes to a complete conclusion, but introduces themes (such as the human Resistance on Promise, and the "Breeds" used by the Sentient Council to fight them) which ***Vampire Fleet*** *explores in more detail. The adventure is playable by itself with simply the information included in this article and the basic* ***TNE*** *rules. Referees will find additional information of value in the Diaspora sector map and descriptions in* ***Deluxe Traveller****, the subsector maps and planetary descriptions in* ***Path of Tears,*** *and the short adventure* ***Lady Elise*** *included in the* ***Traveller Referee Screen.***

The player characters are contacted by the RCES and asked to undertake an extremely hazardous mission in the Wilds. Where they are contacted is unimportant. The purpose of the mission is recovery of the crew of a Dawn League ship, long thought lost. However, conventional Reformation Coalition warships cannot be used on the mission, for reasons which will become clear from the briefing. Local resistance to the mission is assessed at well beyond the capability of Coalition ground forces to overcome, even if complete surprise could be achieved. A covert approach, however, has an excellent chance of success.

Because time is short, it would be better if the adventure starts with a contact in the Wilds fairly near Promise, perhaps by RC Navy or Exploration Service officials who have been contacted by Branu Stigmann (see NPC description below). The adventure can as easily begin anywhere in Coalition space, however.

REFEREE'S ABSTRACT

A Free Trader (Branu Stigmann) has brought information concerning a human resistance movement on the Virus-controlled planet Promise (Promise/Diaspora 2827). Because there is a "hole" in the sensor umbrella that covers the planet, it is possible for merchant vessels to land and conduct clandestine trade with the human inhabitants. On the most recent visit, Stigmann learned that one of the resistance cells had rescued the surviving crew of a Dawn League ship.

Most of the adventure itself takes place on the planet Promise. The 60 million human survivors on Promise are only a fraction of the pre-collapse population of 5 billion, but they are not alone. There are somewhere between 30 and 70 thousand sentient Virus-infected robots on the planet, and the totalitarian oligarchy that rules the world is the Sentient Council, made up of the largest sentient data-processing systems on the planet. These systems run the starport and rule the inhabitants, both biological and mechanical. The nominal tech level of 9 is that in use at the starport; most of the human-inhabited parts of the planet are barely at tech level 1.

The player characters arrive safely on Promise to recover the missing Dawn League crew, and of course must overcome some unexpected difficulties along the way. They will have to allay the natural suspicion of the first resistance group they meet, using persuasion and diplomacy. They will have to journey some distance overland to get to the surviving crew, who are help by a separate group of resistance fighters. Along the way they may encounter desert nomads and "Breed" patrols sent out by the Virus-controlled planetary rulers, and probably fight their way through them. Diligent and resourceful players will, however, manage to win their way through and recover the crew members, but will then make a surprising discovery.

BRIEFING

As the briefing may take place anywhere from one of the Coalition homeworlds to the wardroom of an RCES clipper operating deep in the Wilds, the choice of briefers is up to the referee. Also present with the briefer will be the Free Trader captain Branu Stigmann, a flamboyant friendly-looking merchant with just a hint of the pirate about him. After introductions have been made, the briefer begins.

"Thanks for signing up on such short notice and with very little information. The level of secrecy is important, as any leaks of what I'm about to tell you could have some pretty severe consequences for a lot of people. You'll understand what I mean by that in a moment.

"We've known for some time that there was an extraordinarily high concentration of Vampire ship activity along a line from coreward running down through the Promise subsector, right through what used to be call the Unity of Promise, and into Khulam subsector. The local Free Traders call it the Vampire Highway. Over the last two years we've lost a number of vessels in this region, vessels that have disappeared without a trace. We've always suspected that Vampire activity of one sort or another may be the cause.

"I think you've already met Captain Stigmann here. He's a Free Trader working the Promise subsector and points coreward, playing tag with Vampire fleets all up and down the "Highway." Captain Stigmann has been able to land repeatedly on the Planet Promise and trade with the local human survivors. He's made contact with the local resistance and has assembled a fairly detailed picture of life on that world. The picture is very grim. I'm going to turn the briefing over to him now."

Branu Stigmann stands up and bows, smiling broadly as he does so.


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"It is my pleasure to meet all of you. Our host makes me sound like some kinda hero, but that ain't so. What I do is very safe compared to what all you people do, and I salute you.

"So, down to the business, okay? Maybe a year ago I talk with another Free Trader who's tradin' household goods and arms to the Outbackers on Promise, and haulin' out relic machinery. All tech 15 stuff, you know? Some really nice merchandise. Only problem is, how do you land on the place? The whole rock's swarmin' with Virus-crazy tin cans—robots, you know?—and run by some council of big computers. That kinda cranks the risk factor up a bit.

"So this fella tells me about a hole in the planetary sensor net, far side of the planet from the old starport. The starport, that's where most of the machines hang out anyway. Most of the people that are left skeedaddled for the outback.

"Last year or so I've been makin' the run in and out of Promise. It's still pretty chancy, what with all those Vampire ships comin' and goin' all the time, so I only make the run when I need some real serious cash or when I got a crazy hare up my backside, you know? It gets hard to stay away, though. Those people, they need help. They need help real bad. Not that there's much I can do, but I try to run the occasional shipment of guns and ammo into them. I've run into some tin cans out in the Wilds that weren't half-bad, but the cans on this rock are as sick as any I've ever seen. And there are lots of them. I mean *lots* of them. Thousands. Maybe tens of thousands.

"So there's kind of a half-assed resistance movement going in the Outback. They spend half their time fighting each other, and when they knock over a tin can they think it's some big-deal victory. Well, maybe it is, you know? Gotta start somewhere.

"Okay. So last run, the resistance band I sell to tells me another band off in the hills has ahold of a couple off–worlders. They're the crew of a downed starship and, get this, they say they're from the *Dawn League.* 'Jeeze,' I wonders, 'how long have these guys been down, anyway?' My people don't know much more, though, so I figure the thing to do is get the information out rather than try to tackle this myself. Like, I can really see me humpin' through the desert, duckin' tigers or whatever-the-hell they got out there. I ain't so good without steel under my feet, you know? So here I am, and that's about it."

Stigmann sits down and the briefer stands up and continues the briefing.

"Thank-you Captain Stigmann, both for the briefing and the assistance.

"People, if this is indeed a Dawn League crew, we have to bring them home, and that's where you come in. There are six Dawn League vessels still unaccounted for: DLS *Brilliant, Dämmerlicht, Dawn, Horus, Mary Elise,* and *Reine Soleil.* This crew could be from any of them. Or, this could be a trap.

"Okay. Objectives. One: locate the downed crew personnel, if there are any, and determine their identities. Two: recover same, unless they are hostiles. Three: establish friendly contact with the local resistance groups. That may be tough if they are as hostile to each other as it seems. Four: gather as much intel as possible concerning the defenses of the planet and the capabilities of the resistance, provided that can be done without jeopardizing the previous priority objectives. Five: prepare recommendations concerning future operations.

"Insertion. Captain Stigmann has volunteered to take you in. He knows the way in past the sensor net and he can put you in touch with the local resistance cell. We'll send along a pretty substantial gift of fireworks to help win them over. After that you're on your own.

"Hostiles. Not known. You'll have to quiz the locals once you get there.

"Extraction. Captain Stigmann will extract you as well. How long can you give the team on the ground, sir?"

Stigmann speaks up at once.

"Gotta lift in one hundred hours. The software glitch in their skywatch program lets me sneak in behind a small moon, but it transits once every one hundred hours, and then I gotta lift."

"Are there any questions? If not, then good luck and bring our people home."

ARRIVAL ON PROMISE

Stigmann's vessel, *Bonne Chance,* will arrive at Promise without serious mishap, although the referee may want to run adventure encounters along the way. Once in the Promise system Stigmann will make a coasting approach, timing his approach to match the orbit of a small moon with a period of about 100 hours. Stigmann will use the moon to screen him in close approach and then make a quick descent to the planet surface on the side opposite the starport.

Stigmann "grounds" ship in a small lake and immediately begins using his on-board fuel processing plant to crack hydrogen. The surrounding countryside is arid badlands, with lots of low scrubby vegetation. Stigmann carries a fairly substantial open motor launch in his cargo hold and with this carries both the player characters and a load of small arms ammunition and RAM grenades to shore. He is met there by a scout from the Black January Brigade, the local resistance band, and the scout departs to bring the band's leader.

After an hour or two Leslie Langeron, the leader of the Black January Brigade, along with a dozen or more bodyguards, will arrive. They are all dressed



Branu Stigmann

Free Trader captain of the far trader *Bonne Chance.*

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon (Slug Pistol)

Other Assets: Astrogation 13, Communications 12, Persuasion 15, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 14, Sensors 14

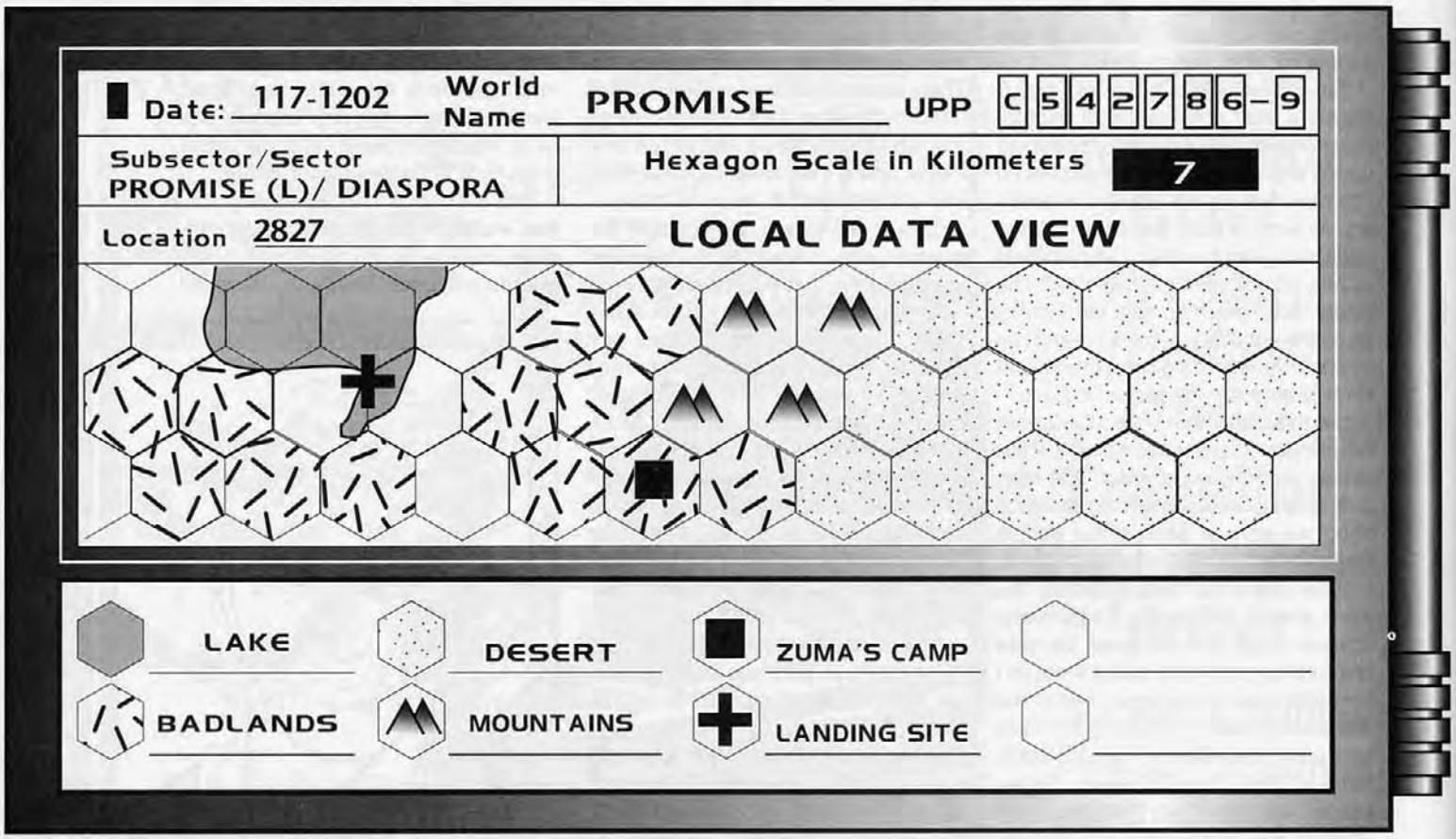
Motivation: *Heart 4:* He is a kind-hearted man, inclined to give what help he can to those who need it. This keeps him poor and has led him into unnecessary danger more than once.

Club 3: Stigmann is braver than he lets on. He has been in many difficult situations and remains cool and capable when in danger.

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in a mix of clothing items wrapped tightly from head to toe. They have ammunition belts and weapons in profusion. About half of the people from the band have indelible ink bar codes tattooed on their foreheads. This is the laser scan ID system adopted by the computers who control the starport and most of the planet surface. Those without it were born outside of computer-controlled territory.

Langeron will have a number of items of damaged tech 15 equipment with which to barter. Stigmann will instead introduce the players to her and explain that the ammunition is a gift on their behalf from the Coalition. In return, the mission team would like her assistance in recovering the downed starship crew. At this point Langeron will begin negotiating directly with the head of the mission team. This bargaining session should be roleplayed out between the referee and the players, using the NPC sidebar description of Langeron provided below.

The band holding the crewmembers usually camps no more than twenty kilometers away, so a hard march of one day should take the players to them. But Zumo, the leader of the band, is a difficult man to deal with, Langeron points out, and there is some danger from 'Breed' patrols, which have been increased lately. Unless the players blunder badly, Langeron will be willing to help them, but will want an additional gift of ammunition, and perhaps heavier weapons, in return.

If the players ask about 'Breed' patrols, Langeron will laugh.

"Old Stigmann didn't tell you about the 'Breeds,' huh? We knocked over too many of their tin cans, I guess, and so they've been using a cheaper version for the last couple years. They take a human slave and bolt on a bunch of extra stuff. They put a little steel brain in the head too, along with the meat one, to keep 'em honest. We call 'em 'Breeds.' Some of the tin cans call 'em 'Meat Puppets.'"

If the players ask for a detailed description, she will just shrug. "So far we haven't seen any two alike. I guess the Cans haven't found a design they're happy with yet. Some of them don't hardly work at all, but meat's cheap."

Since time is limited, Langeron suggests an immediate departure. She will accompany the players with eight of her best fighters. The rest of the retainers with her will arrange transportation of the ammunition back to the brigade encampment.

Langeron and her eight fighters are all fairly heavily armed. One carries a light machinegun, one a LAG, and the rest assault rifles. Most of them also have one or two RAM grenades and carry a large knife or machete and one or two pistols in addition to their heavier weapon. All are Experienced NPCs for combat. The guards left behind have more primitive weapons, including at least one black powder rifle. Stigmann and his small crew will of course stay behind as well.

JOURNEY TO ZUMO

The one-day march from the lake to Zumo's encampment in the hills should be largely uneventful, although an animal encounter is possible. (There are no tigers on the planet, however, despite Stigmann's fears.) The players should, of course, not know that they will not yet encounter a patrol, and so the referee should make at least one dummy encounter roll along the way.

Soon after they enter the hills where Zumo's encampment is located they will encounter one of Zumo's scouts,

who will challenge them and demand that they throw down their weapons. Langeron will respond with a refusal and some choice comments about the scout's and Zumo's ancestry, after which the scout will call back, in a more friendly tone, "Hey, Leslie, how ya been?" He will then take the party to Zumo's encampment.

Zumo's group, calling itself the Free Human Legion, is smaller than Langeron's with no more than sixty people total. The encampment consists of a dozen or more low, broad black tents, similar to Bedouin tents, that blend into the rocks and sand of the badlands very well. This band is not very well armed, and many of them carry homemade bows or very primitive black powder firearms. They obviously are envious and resentful of the weapons Langeron and her people carry, and they will probably be in positive awe of the player characters' armament.

They soon meet Zumo, a large heavy-set man who looks more the part of a hill bandit than a resistance leader. He and Langeron obviously know each other well, and they trade half-serious insults as a form of greeting. Neither takes offense at the remarks of the other, but there is no evidence of good-natured banter in the exchange either. Langeron obviously has little respect for Zumo, and Zumo just as obviously resents this. As a result, Zumo will attempt to puff up his own importance in the negotiations, and draw them out as long as possible.

Zumo has eight crew members "under his protection." Their ship made a forced landing nearby and his band rescued them before a patrol craft landed and searched the site. He will not let the players see the crewmembers yet, but by way of proof he produces a chipped ship's coffee mug—Navy style without any handle—with the lettering *DLS Lady Elise.*

As a sign of good faith, and in order to make good the risk he has undertaken in sheltering the crew, he wants weapons and ammunition, and he wants them on a fairly lavish scale. At a certain point it may become obvious to the players that what he really wants in more prestige than Langeron, and will insist that he receive equipment better than she has. Furthermore, he wants a large part of it immediately, and so will ask that Langeron's fighters turn over their weapons to his people and then receive replacements from the player characters. Langeron will, of course, absolutely refuse to go along with this, and the negotiations will stall.

Langeron will at some point ask, "What do you think Central Command will think of all this, Zumo? You think they're going to pat you on the back?"

Zumo is obviously embarrassed, but covers it with anger. "Who cares what Central Command says? Do they send guns or ammo for my fighters? Do they send medicine for my wounded? No. All they send are words and more words. Stuff Central Command."

The players will probably ask about Central Command, and either Langeron or Zuma will explain that each resistance unit has a radio satellite uplink receiver from which they receive periodic instructions from "Central Command." Perhaps once a month a courier shows up to whom they give verbal reports. The courier also services the communicator. Couriers originally brought the uplink receivers as well, but for security reasons the resistance units have no other contact with "Central Command."

While the negotiations continue, and are in danger of breaking down completely, a scout arrives with word that a large 'Breed' patrol, perhaps a dozen or more strong, is moving up a narrow valley toward the encampment. Langeron tells her fighters to get ready to leave. This isn't her fight, she announces, and she doesn't intend to waste ammo or people defending Zumo. Zumo's people are obviously very poorly equipped to fight a well-armed patrol this size, but Zumo offers the player characters a deal.

If they will deal with the Breed patrol, he will turn over the crewmembers to them immediately and wait for whatever arms and ammo they wish to give him until a later trip.

AMBUSH

Zumo will provide a scout to guide them to the Breed patrol. The patrol is advancing up a fairly narrow valley, no more than 200 or 300 meters wide, and they are alert to the possibility of an ambush.

The Breeds are all cybernetically altered ("enhanced" is too strong a word in many cases) humans, many of them altered beyond recognition. The cybernetics chapter from **Fire, Fusion, & Steel** provides a good starting point, but some of them have even more radical alterations. One has had both legs removed and is built into a low armored tractor chassis. Several have a gun in place of one arm. One has one leg noticeably longer than the other. He or she walks awkwardly with a very pronounced limp, pausing occasionally



Leslie Langeron

Langeron is the leader of the Black January Brigade, a resistance cell that operates in the area where Stigmann usually grounds ship. The Black January Brigade is a nomadic community of about 150 people, of whom perhaps sixty are actual combatants. The rest are too young or too old to fight, or are mothers nursing infant children.

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon (Slug Rifle), Armed Martial Arts (Small Blade), Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Leadership 14, Persuasion 13, Survival 12, Stealth 12

Motivation: *Club 9:* Langeron is a tough guerrilla fighter. She has seen many horrible things, and years of fighting absolutely merciless machines has trained her to regard violence as an effective and acceptable means of solving problems of almost any sort. The struggle against the machines has become her entire life.

She has never known life without the machines, and has no real vision of what life might be like after victory, nor does she feel a need for such a vision. The struggle itself is sufficient.

Spade 7: Langeron does not think that the isolated, feuding bands will ever accomplish much by themselves. The bands must be united under a single leader—herself—before they can make any real progress against the machines. She has so far been unable to convince "Central Command" (see below) of this, but she keeps trying. To the extent that the Coalition and the players can help her achieve this ambition, she will actively court them, and her perception of their utility in this respect will be the gauge of how enthusiastically and effectively she cooperates with the mission team.



Vishano Sanchez

Sufren naval captain, and commander of the joint Sufren/Dawn League crew of *Lady Elise*.

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Energy Weapon (Energy Pistol)

Other Assets: Astrogation 13, Communications 12, Leadership 10, Persuasion 14, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 12, Sensors 12

Motivation: *Heart Jack:* Sanchez's nickname in the Covenant is "The Owl." He was chosen for the mission based more on his common sense and wisdom than on any particular command or technical skills. The Covenant Navy recognized that they would be sending a line officer on a mission which could easily become the most important diplomatic mission in the Covenant's history, and chose Sanchez for that very reason. He is a kind-hearted man, inclined to give what help he can to those who need it. This keeps him poor and has led him into unnecessary danger more than once.

Spade 3: Sanchez is ambitious, for himself, for his crew, for his service, for his government, and ultimately for his race. There is very little selfishness in his ambition, and it instead manifests itself as a drive to excel, and a will to challenge those around him to excel.

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to rise up on the long leg and look around for signs of their quarry. Most of them have extensive alterations to the head, usually including at least one augmented sensor, and all modifications are extremely visible, with no effort having been made to hide them. The referee probably does not have to design each Breed used, but should instead concentrate of describing the diversity, and in many cases bizarre impracticality, of the modifications.

The Breeds are well armed with ACRs and grenade launchers. Nevertheless, they do not work together very well. Each Breed has two brains, one human and one Virus-infected silicon, and even when they try to work together they are easily confused. Also the Breeds are not expecting anywhere near the level of armament the player characters are likely to have. The players should be able to take them by surprise, provided they take care in the approach and selection of a site, and either kill them or drive them off.

CAPTIVE CREW

When the player characters return to Zumo's encampment, they will be greeted warmly, especially after the scout describes the "battle" between the player characters and the Breed patrol. Zumo sends guards to bring out his "guests," and in moments they return with eight starship crew members. Three are from the original crew of *Lady Elise*, while the other five are in completely unfamiliar uniforms. Their commander introduces himself as Captain Vishano Sanchez of the Covenant of Sufren Navy.

Sanchez and the Dawn League personnel will explain that *Lady Elise* was captured by a Vampire Fleet several years ago and sent coreward along the Vampire Highway. The ship was encountered by a vessel belonging to the Covenant of Sufren and was retaken. (See the adventure **Lady Elise** in the **Traveller Referee's Screen** for additional details.)

After the surviving crew told the Covenant government about the Dawn League and its goals, the Covenant made the decision to contact the League directly, returning both *Lady Elise* and those crew members healthy enough to travel. (Three other crew members are still hospitalized on Sufren, including Johnstone, the chief engineer, who is under psychiatric care.) Unfortunately, the ship ran afoul of another Vampire ship in the Promise system and was forced to crash land on the planet surface. They were rescued by Zumo's group and the players know the rest of the story from there.

CONCLUSION

The crew are in good physical condition and so should be able to make the march back to lake without difficulty. They will be extracted by Stigmann and eventually make it back to Coalition Space.

The three crewmembers of *Lady Elise* will be welcomed as returning heroes, while the five representatives of the Covenant of Sufren will be feted as befits the representatives of the first genuinely friendly multi-world government the Coalition has contacted.

There are several important results from this adventure which should immediately begin to effect play.

First, the Coalition will quickly dispatch a diplomatic mission to the Covenant of Sufren to open friendly relations. Although details of the extent and nature of cooperation between the two will take time, and there may be some rough spots along the way, the two governments have much to offer each other. The Coalition can serve as the source of extensive Hiver technical assistance; the Covenant provides a badly-needed forward base deeper to rimward in the Diaspora sector. The player characters may very well be asked to take part in these early contacts, and these will not be simple diplomatic milk runs. Sufren is dozens of parsecs away, deep in the Wilds and on the other side of the Vampire Highway. Simply getting there can be quite and adventure.

Second, the player characters have brought back a wealth of information about the mysterious world Promise, although in some cases the information raises more questions than it answers. The route onto the world does appear to be a feasible means on infiltrating at least covert intelligence teams, although it would be difficult to make regular large-capacity runs, and so supplying a large and/or heavy ground force seems difficult, if not impossible. Obviously there is some sort of regional, and perhaps planetary, controlling body for the resistance, with impressive technological assets at their disposal (judging from the communicators in use), but who are they, where are they, and are they willing to work with the Coalition? Additional ground missions will certainly be sent to try to answer these questions.

This line of adventure is addressed in **Vampire Fleets.** Ω

The Covenant of Sufren

By David Nilsen

The Covenant of Sufren is a pocket empire in the Sufren subsector (subsector C) of Diaspora. Unlike many pocket empires or even the Reformation Coalition, the Covenant has maintained uninterrupted interstellar contact for the 70 years since the Collapse, no mean feat.

The reason for this fact is the agreement which gives the name to the organization, the Covenant of Sufren. The Covenant is the uniting document of the three member worlds Sufren, Haze and Navarre, and is the codification of the antiviral measures corporately undertaken by these worlds to ensure their survival (see sidebar on page 34). Although the Covenant in many ways appears cruel, thousands of worlds which were unwilling to take these extreme measures perished during the Collapse. But it was not the Covenant alone which enabled these worlds to survive, as antiviral procedures by themselves are not enough to face a determined Vampire Fleet onslaught. By 1130, Sufren was one of only a handful of class B starports remaining in the entire sector, and was therefore the repository of a large number of functioning starships which were preserved by the enforcement of the Covenant. And as the ensuing 70 years exacted a heavy toll on this starfaring force, the Covenant had sufficient ships and parts of ships to somehow make up for these losses, and keep its defenses up.

The Covenant is home to 7.2 billion persons, consisting primarily of humans, but with significant populations of sapient Orcas and Dolphins, and small communities of Droyne, Aslan and Vargr.

Sufren: Sufren is home to the vast majority of the Covenant's citizens, approximately 7 billion, including all sapient races. Sufren takes great pains to maintain a democratic tradition, unusual with a population of this size. This has been made possible by the world's high technology, allowing extensive electronic input from the electorate to their representatives, including frequent referenda, confidence and recall votes. Sufren retains the Covenant's largest population of Orcas and Dolphins, which operate most of the world's numerous aquatic industries.

Haze: Haze is a waterworld, home to 7 million humans, Orcas and Dolphins who live on and around its numerous archipelagoes and artificial island cities. Haze's thin tainted atmosphere has been painstakingly "supercharged" with oxygen over the years by oxygen-cracking plants which extract the oxygen from seawater (and also produce refined liquid hydrogen fuel). The result is a world with a low atmospheric pressure, but with a partial pressure of oxygen approaching Terran levels. Like Navarre, Haze is governed by a direct descendant of its Covenanter, Brooke Heidiann, great-granddaughter of Standley Cherrie.

Navarre: Home to approximately 200 million persons, Navarre was known as Tiasle until 1129, when Gregory Fontenot, exiled Baron of Navar, united the anarchic world in the Reunion Wars and renamed it with an ancient variation of his family name. Navarre is currently ruled by third Protector Gregory Fontenot, grandson of First Protector Gregory Fontenot, the Covenanter. Navarre is a maritime world with extensive manufacturing and mariculture operations based in its oceans. Navarre retains a residual viral infection in its oceans, the result of Virus taking over the world's automated oceanic industry and manufacturing centers during the Collapse. Vampire robots manufactured by these centers still survive in Navarre's oceans, but now in only small numbers, as their sources have been either purged or destroyed.

Other Settlements and Outposts: The Covenant officially consists of four worlds. The fourth, Houstar, is home to a permanent settlement of some 700 persons, engaged in salvaging the technology of this cemetery world. The Covenant also maintains an extensive network of listening posts in the Sufren subsector and neighboring subsectors. Notable among these are Gamov, Troy, White Sea, Heymac, Dahl, Grouard, Navar, Maelstrom, Onliu and worlds in the Shimmer subsector of Massilia. These form the Covenant's first line of defense against vampiric infiltration.

The Covenant has only recently (1200) founded a Scout Service and embarked on a policy of reexpansion and recontact. Fruits of this project are outposts in the rimward half of the subsector. Mindful of the necessity of manpower for reexpansion, a current high priority project is contact with the TEDs of the high population worlds of Backman (300 million), Hervestia (200 million) and Neefi (900 million).

COVENANT OF SUFREN TECHNOLOGY

The Covenant's technology is notable for its innovations in two areas: aquatic technology and antiviral technology. Aquatic technology is necessitated by the maritime orientation of its three member worlds, and advanced by the significant populations of Orcas and Dolphins of these worlds. Because of their size, Orcas are only rarely encountered aboard spacecraft, but Dolphins in wetsuits fitted with mechanical arms are routinely assigned to starship duty.

Because of its close contact and long struggle with Virus, the Covenant is well-versed in viral combat. All Covenant starship crews carry at least one expert on Virus who has access to a "snake," an anti-virus weapon which is itself actually a virus (and whose development was made possible by Articles XVIII and XIX of the Covenant). The snake is electronically stored code that is manually inserted into a virus-infected system. The snake then attacks the resident virus, gradually flushing it from peripheral systems by destroying electronic access pathways (the snake's "cage," which is left hooked into the system, contains a portable power supply which provides the juice for the snake to burn out circuitry as necessary). Ideally, the snake corners what remains of the virus' conscious functions and isolates it there, where it is no longer a threat and can be analyzed at leisure. Naturally, the snake's actual performance varies with circumstances and the quality of the virus it is attacking. (See the upcoming sourcebook **Vampire Fleets** for further details on snakes and electronic combat.)

SHIPS OF THE COVENANT

Although its starport is no longer capable of manufacturing spaceships, Sufren had one of the best surviving starports in the sector at the time of the Collapse, and was therefore in possession of a relatively large number of starships undergoing overhaul and other yardwork. This collection of vessels formed the basis of the Covenant's current fleet of vessels, lovingly modified and rebuilt over and over again in the ensuing 70 years. The Covenant's major combatants (above 1000 displacement tons) have all been converted to gigantic system defense boats, thereby providing their large jump drives as sources of spare parts to keep the Covenant's smaller, more easily maintained starships operational. By carefully and creatively using and re-using Haze and Sufren's relic tech level 15 technology, the Covenant is able to field a remarkably capable fleet by the standards of 1201. However, its proximity to the Vampire Highway (see **Path of Tears**, page 99) has resulted in relatively high levels of attrition over the years, even by Wilds standards. This unremitting conflict has also given the Covenant a highly trained fleet: Unless otherwise noted, crews of the Covenant Navy and Scout Service are of Line quality.

Starships owned by the Covenant Navy are numbered in the J-series (for jump-capable), while the numbering of system defense boats varies by where they are deployed. Ships of the newly organized Covenant Scout Service are numbered in a single series with the prefix "SCS."

The Covenant of Sufren

I: The survival of human civilization on Sufren, Haze and Navarre is more important than the survival of any individual, or group of individuals. (1131)

II: It has been proven that the transmission of Virus is sufficient to destroy all life on a world. (1131)

III: Pursuant to Articles I and II, all agents that cannot be proven to not harbor Virus are assumed to be infected. Agents that do not assist in proving that they are Virus-free are assumed to be infected. Agents that force the defense of the civilizations of Sufren, Haze and Navarre while they are still assumed to be Virus-infected are responsible for their own fate, regardless of whether they are aware of these articles or not. (1131)

IV: Given the understanding of Articles I and II, all witting or unwitting agents of Virus transfer are punishable by death. (1131)

V: Pursuant to Articles III and IV, all spacecraft on approach vectors to Sufren, Haze and Navarre which cannot prove they are Virus-free will be destroyed. Timely warning will be given when possible, but the absence of such warning does not void the application of this article. (1131)

VI: These articles are considered primarily to be enabling concepts. Where precise definition or adjudication of these articles is required to enable their implementation, such judgements will be produced by the Signatories of these original articles, or agents duly appointed by them. (1131)

VII: Pursuant to Article VI, the signatories will meet at least once per Imperial year, although such meetings may be conducted as often as is deemed prudent by the Signatories. (1131)

VIII: These articles take precedence over any laws or understandings enforced or observed on the worlds of Sufren, Haze and Navarre. The refusal to abide by these and any appended articles is treated as equivalent to Virus Transfer under Article IV. (1131)

IX: The proper enforcement of Article IV by any citizen under this Covenant is considered to be an act of state, and not of murder. The propriety of such acts is determined by the legitimate means available. (1132)

X: The maintenance of Virus in any form for any purpose is considered to be "transfer" for the purposes of Article IV. (1132)

XI: Article VII is amended to read that such meetings must be conducted by all Signatories or their duly appointed agents whenever required by any one Signatory. (1133)

XII: Virus as a putative life-form is not human, and therefore possesses no rights as enumerated in these articles. (1136)

XIII: Non-Virus Interstellar Civilization is a Good subsidiary only to Article I. Keepers of this Covenant are obliged to offer assistance to such civilizations only where this assistance does not conflict with Article I. (1143)

XIV: This article empowers the creation of a detailed body of regulations that carry the precise meaning of these articles in specific circumstances. As properly approved under Articles VI, VII and XI, these regulations carry the force of these Articles of Covenant as understood in Article VIII. (1145)

XV: The meaning of the term Human in these articles is understood to mean organic sapient life, and should include members of all human races as well as Orcas, Dolphins, Droyne, Chirpers, Aslan and Vargr, though is not limited to only those listed races. (1148)

XVI: It should be understood by future observers that any excesses carried out in the spirit of these articles is solely the responsibility of the Signatories, and not of the agents which have abided by these articles. (1148)

XVII: For the understanding of Articles VI, VII, VIII, XI and XVI, all duly appointed agents of the Signatories are subject to Article XVI. (1153)

XVIII: Under details set out in the Article XIV regulations, examples of Virus may be classified as harmful to the human civilizations of Sufren, Haze and Navarre, or beneficial to the civilizations of Sufren, Haze and Navarre. The maintenance for any purposes of any example of Virus classed by these regulations as harmful is considered to be "transfer" for the purposes of Article IV. The maintenance for proper purposes as defined in these regulations of an example of Virus classed by these regulations as beneficial does not carry this understanding. (1158)

XIX: This article declares Article X to be null and void from this date on. (1158)

XX: For the purposes of Article XII, humans directly infected with Virus are considered to be human first and Virus second, but remain subject to Articles I, III, IV, and XVIII. (1161)

XXI: Article XIII is specifically understood to be subservient to Article XVIII. (1166)

XXII: Further refinements to these articles will be confined to Article XIV regulations. (1175)

XXIII: The simple maintenance of the survival of human civilization on Sufren, Haze and Navarre is no longer a sufficient goal for those subject to these articles. The expansion of human interstellar civilization within the concepts of these articles is the proper goal for adherents to the Covenant. Adjustment of the particular details of other articles to this mandate is subject to Article XIV. (1200)

Covenanter-Class Scout Cruiser: The Covenanter class is a useful and successful conversion program undertaken by the Covenant of Sufren government. Following the collapse, working jump drives and high-tech computers and weapons became steadily more scarce, requiring the progressive cannibalization of TL14 and 15 ships. Two of the most common types available were the *Gazelle* close escorts and ubiquitous scout/couriers. By chopping the nose from a *Gazelle* and grafting an entire scout hull to its bow, the TL15 electronics suite of the scout could be used, while freeing the scout's jump drive for use in another hull, or for parts to keep other ships running. The hull of the former scout was gutted to allow it to be strengthened for 3G operations, and then its electronics were re-installed. As TL14 and 15 EMS arrays share many components, the TL14 and 15 systems from the original *Gazelle* and Scout hulls can be readily used as spare support for each other. Other installed systems range from TL10 to TL12, cannibalized from other vessels or new-built.

The class is named after the original leaders who brought their worlds into the Covenant of Sufren, remembered as "the Covenanters." The first two vessels are named for John Kain of Sufren and Gregory Fontenot of Navarre. The class fills the Covenant's need for long-range exploration craft with a formidable self-defense capability. As such, *Kain* and *Fontenot* comprise the spearhead of the Covenant's new exploration and reclamation program. Two more Covenanters are being converted from damaged hulls.

Unlike the original *Gazelle*s, the lateral fuel tanks on the Covenanters are no longer dropable, but are permanently attached to the hull. The position of the former ventral barbette has been taken by a missile barbette, which is used for the launch and control of long-range remotely commanded vehicles (RCVs).

Covenanters carry Crack crews. Technical details of the Covenanters can be found in **Brilliant Lances** or the **Traveller Referee's Screen**.

***Lauritson*-Class Picket Ships:** Four of these sophisticated *Gazelle* variants serve in the Covenant Navy, including the Covenant's Fleet Flagship, *Standley Cherrie*. The *Lauritson*s carry Crack crews. Technical details of these ships are found on page 36 of this issue.

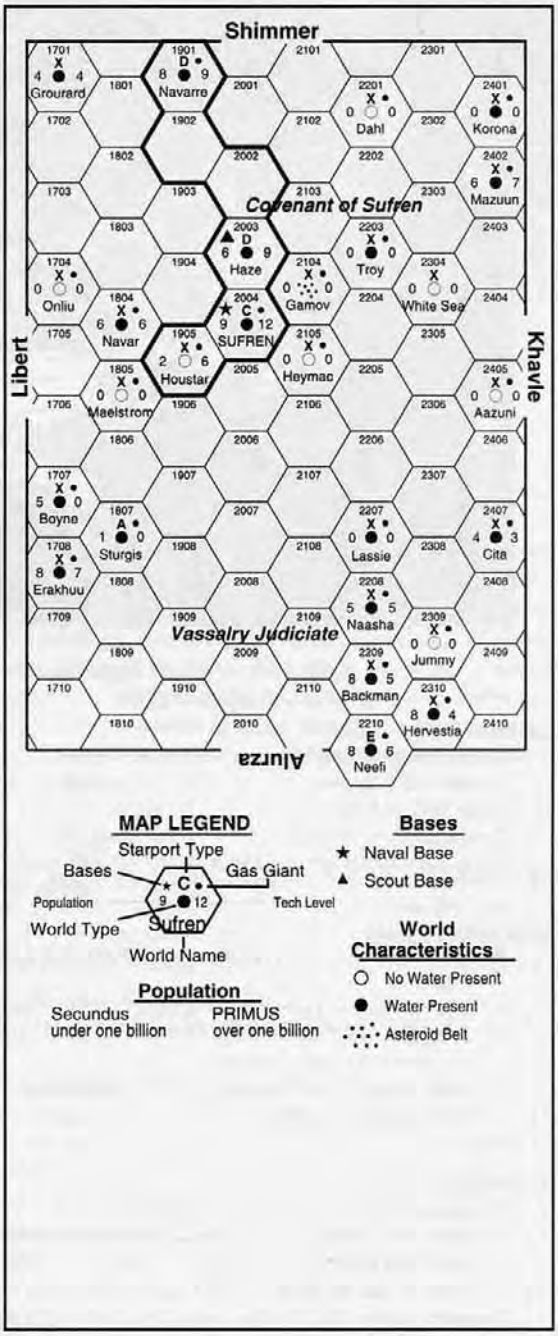
***Gazelle* and *Fiery*-Class Close Escorts:** These vessels form the bulk of the Covenant's jump-capable navy, with 14 total in service. Technical details of these are found in the **TNE** basic rules (*Gazelle* only) and **Brilliant Lances** (both).

Other Vessels: The Covenant Navy also includes six patrol cruisers, a pair of *Donosev*-class survey ships, three Mercenary cruisers, a score of scout/couriers, plus a handful of miscellaneous vessels. One *Chrysanthemum*-class vessel, *Gorseblossom*, is maintained as a jump-capable "line-of-battle" ship. The Covenant's privately owned merchant service includes a variety of standard types in the 100- to 600-ton range. The Covenant maintains no jump-capable vessels larger than 1000 tons.

Dual Listing: Each world is listed twice. Upper line is pre-Collapse data; lower line is New Era data. Pre-Collapse data is available to all characters having pre-Collapse databases. New Era data is available to inhabitants of the Covenant of Sufren, but not to inhabitants of the Reformation Coalition.

SUFREN Subsector in 1201
(Subsector C/Diaspora Sector)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Grourard	1701	A896566-E		Ni Ag O:2004	400	LI	G2 V M4 D
Grourard	1701	X896444-4		Ni Lo	500	Wi	G2 V M4 D
Onliu	1704	C110433-F		Ni Lo	324	LI	M1 V M6 D M0 D
	1704	X110000-0		Ba	024	—	M1 V M6 D M0 D
Boyne	1707	B462546-F		Ni C:5	603	LI	M1 V
Boyne	1707	X462566-0		Ni	103	Wi	M1 V
Erakhuu	1708	B89688C-C			902	LI	G1 II
Erakhuu	1708	X89686B-7			B802	Wi	G1 II
Navar	1804	C5479DG-B		Hi In	805	LI	F9 V
Navar	1804	X54767B-6		Ni Ag	B305	Wi	F9 V
Maelstrom	1805	B421210-F		Ni Po Lo	903	LI	K3 V
Maelstrom	1805	X421000-0		Ba	003	—	K3 V
Sturgis	1807	A444203-F	N	Ni Lo	102	LI	K0 V
Sturgis	1807	X444103-0		Ni Lo	302	Wi	K0 V
Tiasle	1901	D656AFF-B		Hi	224	Ma	K9 V
Navarre	1901	D6568AC-9			224	Su	K9 V
Houstar	1905	C8C4620-C		Ni Fl	113	LI	M0 V M7 D
Houstar	1905	X8C4211-6		Cm Ni Fl Lo	713	Su	M0 V M7 D
Haze	2003	B74A689-F		Ni Wa	700	Ma	G0 V M7 D
Haze	2003	D74A6A8-9	S	Ni Wa	700	Su	G0 V M7 D
Sufren	2004	B686973-F	N	Hi An Cp	623	LI	M1 V
Sufren	2004	C686948-C	N	Hi An	723	Su	M1 V
Gamov	2104	C0009EF-E		Hi In As Na	811	Ma	K1 V M2 D
	2104	X000000-0		Ba As	011	—	K1 V M2 D
Heymac	2105	C300136-D		Ni Va Lo	301	LI	M4 V
	2105	X300000-0		Ba Va	001	—	M4 V
Dahl	2201	B100510-F		Ni Va	113	Ma	M0 V
	2201	X100000-0		Ba Va	013	—	M0 V
Troy	2203	C622756-C		Po Na	814	Ma	M2 V M1 D
	2203	X622000-0		Ba	014	—	M2 V M1 D
Lassie	2207	A22136A-F		Ni Po Lo O:2405	104	Ma	G0 V M5 D
	2207	X221000-0		Ba	004	—	G0 V M5 D
Naasha	2208	D697576-9		Ni Ag	814	Ma	G0 V M2 D
Naasha	2208	X697554-5		Ni Ag	314	Wi	G0 V M2 D
Backman	2209	B55497B-D	N	Hi	103	BC	K0 V M0 D
Backman	2209	X554869-5			B303	Wi	K0 V M0 D
Neefi	2210	C66A978-C		Hi Wa	602	BC	G8 II
Neefi	2210	E66A899-6		Wa	902	Wi	G8 II
White Sea	2304	C100537-F		Ni Va	500	Ma	M3 V
	2304	X100000-0		Ba Va	000	—	M3 V
Jummy	2309	E100145-B		Ni Va Lo	914	Ma	K3 V M7 D
	2309	X100000-0		Ba Va	014	—	K3 V M7 D
Hervestia	2310	C554A76-D		Hi	703	BC	K3 V
Hervestia	2310	X554879-4			B203	Wi	K3 V
Korona	2401	B523648-C		Ni Po Na	A713	Ma	K2 V
	2401	X523000-0		Ba	013	—	K2 V
Mazuun	2402	DA7A630-9		Ni Wa	402	Ma	G0 V
Mazuun	2402	XA7A647-7		Ni Wa	B802	Wi	G0 V
Aazuni	2405	B210463-F	N	Ni Lo C:0 O:2504	211	Ma	M3 V M7 D
	2405	X210000-0		Ba	011	—	M3 V M7 D
Cita	2407	C544412-C		Ni Lo	723	Ma	K4 V
Cita	2407	X544456-3		Ni Lo	223	Wi	K4 V



Base Codes: N: Naval Base; S: Scout Base.

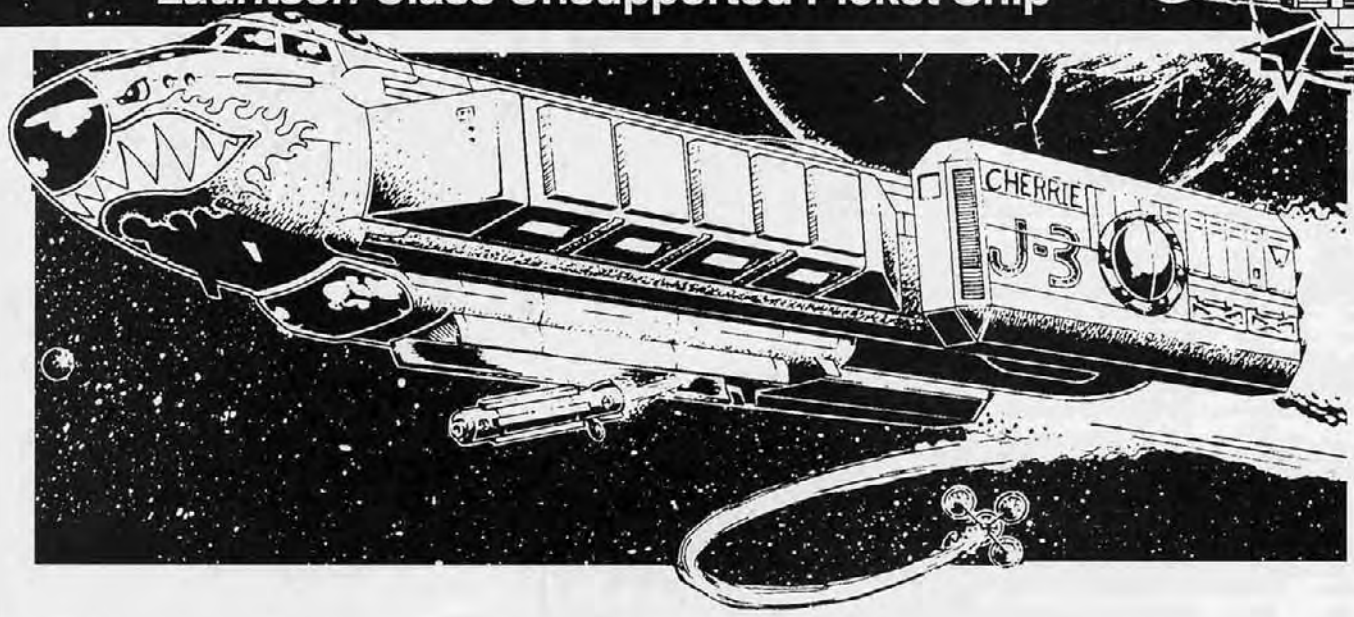
Trade Codes: Ag: Agricultural; An: Ancients' Site; As: Asteroid; Ba: Barren; Cm: Cemetary world (a world whose original population has died off completely, and the current population is all recent settlers); Cp: subsector Capital; Cx: Sector Capital; C:N or D:N indicates that the world is/was populated in part by Chirpers or Droyne,and the number "N" following the colon indicates how many tenths of the world's population consist of these races; De: Desert; Fl: Fluid oceans; Hi: High population; Ic: Ice-capped; In: Industrial; O:NNNN indicates that the world is owned by the world in the indicated (NNNN) hex; Po: Poor; Ri: Rich; Rs: Research station (with Greek letter designation); Va: Vacuum; Wa: Water world.

TPPG indicates Travel Zone, Population Multiplier, Planetoid Belts and Gas Giants. If Travel Zone digit is empty in pre-Collapse listing, it was listed as a Green Travel Zone; A and R indicate Amber and Red zones respectively.

If Travel Zone digit is empty in New Era listing, there is no particular meaning, as there is no surviving interstellar organization to assign travel codes to worlds. A B in this column indicates a Balkanized world; the government code in the UPP string describes the predominant government on the world.

Allegiance Codes: BC: Backman Cluster; LI: Lucan's Imperium; Ma: Margaret's Faction; Na: Nonaligned, no off-planet allegiance, and these worlds use the government types listed on page 188 of the **TNE** rulebook; Su: Covenant of Sufren; Wi: Wilds (No off-world allegiance, and perhaps no off-world contact. Use Wilds government type on **TNE** page 191. In the case of government type 6: "Technologically Elevated Dictator," the world's listed tech level is the world's sustainable tech level. The tech level of the TED and his/her support structure is higher, up to the world's original tech level.); "—" indicates no allegiance because there is no population.

Lauritson-Class Unsupported Picket Ship



General Data

Displacement: 300/400 tons
Length: 48.5 meters
Price: MCr347.88
Configuration: Wedge SL
Hull Armor: 62
Volume: 4200 m³/5600 m³
Target Size: S
Tech Level: 14
Mass (Loaded/Empty): 4754.81/4359.65 with tanks
4247.56/3946.55 without tanks

Engineering Data

Power Plant: 891 MW Fusion Power Plant (99 MW/hit), 1 year duration
Jump Performance: 3 with tanks attached (1120m³), 5 without (1260 m³)
G-Rating: 3G with tanks (200 MW/G), 5G without (150 MW/G), Contra-Grav lifters (30 MW)
G-Turns: 106.6, 25 m³ fuel each, with tanks attached; 70.4, 18.75 m³ each, without tanks
Maint: 151

Electronics

Computer: 3×TL-14 Model Fb (1 MW ea.)
Commo: 300,000km radio (10 hexes; 10 MW), 2×1000 AU maser (∞; 0.6 MW ea.)
Avionics: TL-8+ Avionics
Sensors: Passive EMS folding array 240,000km (8 hexes; 0.3 MW), Active EMS 360,000km (12 hexes; 17 MW)
ECM/ECCM: 180,000 km EMS jammer (6 hexes; 22 MW), EM masking package (5.6 MW)
Controls: Bridge with 8×Bridge Workstation, plus 8 other workstations

Armament

Offensive: 2×TL-14 150-Mj Laser Turret (Loc: 16, 17; Arcs: All; 4.2 MW, 1 crew ea.), 1×TL-14 300-Mj Laser Barbette (Loc: 10; Arcs: 1,2,3; 8.3 MW, 1 crew)
Master Fire Directors: 1×TL-14 Beam (5 Diff Mod; No Msl; 10 hexes; 1.62 MW, 1 crew), 1×TL-14 Drone (5 Diff Mod; Drone ∞ hexes [maser]; 10 hexes; 2.22 MW, 1 crew)

	Short	*Medium*	*Long*	*Ext.*
150-Mj Laser Turret	2:$^{1}/_{10}$-31	4:$^{1}/_{10}$-31	8:$^{1}/_{10}$-31	16:$^{1}/_{10}$-31
300-Mj Laser Barbette	10:$^{1}/_{14}$-43	20:$^{1}/_{14}$-43	40:$^{1}/_{8}$-26	80:$^{1}/_{4}$-13

Accommodations

Life Support: Extended (0.84 MW), Grav Compensators (5G; 21 MW)
Crew: 22 (7×Engineering, 2×Electronics, 2×Maneuver, 5×Gunnery, 2×Maintenance, 3×Command, 1×Medical)
Crew Accommodations: 2×Small Stateroom (0.0005 MW ea.), 8×Large Stateroom (0.001 MW ea.) (multiple-occupancy)
Cargo: 9.355 m³, one small cargo hatch
Small Craft and Launch Facilities: external grapple used for carriage of 26 ton external drone hangar. Hangar has space for 11.5 tons of drones, usually 3×MOLRASP plus space for one 2-ton drone.
Air Locks: 3

Notes

The *Lauritson* UPS is a *Gazelle*-class Close Escort modifed to perform as a fleet or independent ("unsupported") picket. As with its *Gazelle* forebear, the *Lauritson* is a tight design, requiring four of its 22 crewmembers to "hot bunk."

Of the extra crew above the *Gazelle* complement, one mans the drone control MFD at a workstation in the ventral drone pod, one mans a bridge "repeater" station for the drone MFD as the second electronics crewmember, another is dedicated maintenance crew for the sensor drones, and the fourth is a medic, carried because the UPSs are often used for long-duration independent missions.

The drone pod displaces the small craft carried by the *Gazelle*, plus the ventral laser barbette, totalling 26 tons. The pod has space for three MOLRASP (Maneuvering Off-board Long Range Active Sensor Platform) drones. These drones are detailed at the bottom of the page. The "Lad" notation under sensors is a ladar sensor.

Without drop tanks, the *Lauritson* consumes 889.872 MW. With tanks attached, only 739.872 MW are needed.

Although streamlined with the drop tanks attached, the *Lauritson* only has contra-grav performance for 300 tons, not 400.

2665 m³ of fuel total, 1345 carried in 2 50-ton drop tanks, 1320 internal. 1120 m³ fuel for jump 3 with tanks attached, 1260 m³ for jump 5 without tanks. Fuel purification machinery (7.6 MW), 10.52 hours to refine 2665 m³.

Drop tanks are armored to same level as ship, and equipped with EMM.

DAMAGE TABLES

Area (1D20)	*Surface Hits*	*Internal Explosion*
1	1-10: Ant	1-10: Elec, 11-20: Qtrs
2	1-6: Ant	Elec
3-4	1-2: EMMR	Qtrs
5, 15, 20		Eng
6-9, 12-14		Hold
10	1: AL	1-10: LB, 11-20: Qtrs
11		1-10: LB, 11-20: Hold
16-17	1: AL	1-4: LT, 5-20: Eng
18-19	Small Craft	Hold

Systems	
PP-9H	EMMR-(5h)
JD-7H	CG-1H
LS-5H	SSR-(2h)
LB-2H	MD-1H
LT-1H	LSR-1H
FPP-8H	EMM-1H
Hangar-1H	MFD-(4h)
ELS-2H	All Others-(1h)
AG-1H	

TL	*Description*	*Vol*	*Mass*	*MCr*	*G-turns*	*Duration*	*Comm*	*Sensor*	*Sigs*
14	MOLRASP Act/Pass	3	66.4	31	94/3	∞	∞M	16A, 5P(F), 8Lad	+3/+2/+3/+2/+1

PUTTING THE HEAT BACK IN PLASMA

By Frank Chadwick and Dave Nilsen

One of the most consistent requests we receive with respect to the equipment in **Traveller® the New Era** is to increase the effectiveness of high energy weapons. Although we're reluctant to tinker with design sequences and published equipment, the pressure for tougher fusion and plasma rifles has been almost irresistable.

Never let it be said that we don't listen to customers. In fact, the well-known third law of retail sales is "Always listen to your customers." (The first and second laws are "Never kill a customer," and "You break it, you buy it.") So we took a good look at man-portable high energy weapons and concluded that, although they weren't as good as grenade launchers, at least they were real expensive. Hmmm. Perhaps, we decided, there was something to all those annoying complaints after all. So here, due to popular demand, are the official modifications to the **Fire, Fusion & Steel™** design sequences for energy weapons.

PRIMARY CHANGES

These are the changes to the high energy weapon design sequences in **Fire, Fusion, & Steel**. All changes are grouped by page number.

Page 67 (Explosive Power Generation)

Change the mass of EPG cartridges to volume ÷ 4 (instead of volume × 8).

Page 121 (High Energy Weapons)

Range: Short range for plasma guns is now 100 × the square root of pulse energy in Megajoules (instead of 30 × pulse energy).

Short range for fusion guns is now 150 × the square root of pulse energy in Megajoules (instead of 50 × pulse energy)

Damage: Damage value (D) is now 30 × the square root of pulse energy in Megajoules (instead of 11.5 × the square root of pulse energy)

Page 122 (High Energy Weapons)

Penetration: The penetration rating for *both* plasma and fusion guns is now 1-2-10.

Price: The revised component price multipliers for plasma and fusion guns are shown below.

Component	*Plasma*	*Fusion*
Firing Unit	600	1000
Support Hardware	600	1000
Gyro-Compensator*	600	600
Inertial Compensator*	1000	1000
Recoil Cradle	25	25
Towing Carriage	2	2
Autoloader	10	10
Gun Shield	1	1

SECONDARY CHANGES

The above changes to the **FF&S** design sequences result in secondary changes in other **Traveller** products where high energy weapons are discussed or detailed. Below are the changes in **Traveller: the New Era**, **Fire, Fusion, & Steel**, **Smash & Grab**, and the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide** necessitated by the high energy weapon upgrade. Note that **Striker II** is completely up-to-date with this change, and therefore is complete as published.

Changes are grouped by book and page number. Changed material is underlined like this to make it easy to spot, and references to existing or previous material is often included within quotation marks "like this" to make it easier to spot the material that needs to be modified or replaced.

Traveller: The New Era

The changes below refer to the 2nd printing, recognizeable by the notation "Mark I, Mod 1 (December 1993)" on the credits page.

Page 297: In the first full paragraph, the example fusion gun should have penetration ratings of 1-2-10, not "½-1-4." This changes its rating as a vehicle gun to 10-10-5-1.

Page 355: The following changes are required for the Plasma Bazooka:

The bazooka is a 10cm weapon, not "9cm," its ammo is 10×330, not "9×320," its empty weight is 34.6, not "27," its loaded weight is 45, not "43.2," its round weight is 10.4, not "16.2," its weapon price is 20,736, not "67,500," its round price is 520, not "400," its damage value is 51, not "16," its penetration values are 51-51-26-5, not "16-16-8-2," and its short range is 170, not "60." Note that these changes are summarized in the two tables at the end of this article.

Page 356: The following changes are required for the high-energy weapons:

The 4.3cm plasma rifle has a loaded weight of 15.65, not "17.4," a magazine of 10, not "5," a weapon price of 4320, not "18,000," ammo price of 211, not "153," damage value of 23, not "9," penetration values of 23-23-12-2, not "9-9-5-1," and a short range of 80, not "20."

The 4.7cm plasma rifle has a loaded weight of 36.2, not "35.53," a magazine of 20, not "10," a weapon price of 4800, not "20,000," ammo price of 539, not "361," damage value of 27, not "10," penetration values of 27-27-14-3, not "10-10-5-1," and a short range of 90, not "20."

The 4.1cm compensated plasma rifle has a loaded weight of 12.9, not "14.5," a magazine of 8, not "4," a weapon price of 10,880, not "40,000," ammo price of 98, not "87," damage value of 27, not "10," penetration values of 27-27-14-3, not "10-10-5-1," single-shot recoil of 5, not "7," and short range of 90, not "20."

The 4.7cm fusion rifle has a loaded weight of 37.8, not "40.1," a magazine of 20, not "10," a weapon price of 9600, not "72,000," ammo price of 331, not "257," damage value of 33, not "13," penetration ratings of 1-2-10, not "½-1-4," penetration values of 33-33-17-3, not "26-26-13-3," bulk of 5, not "6," and short range of 160, not "90."

The 4.7cm compensated fusion rifle has a loaded weight of 19.4, not "21.7," a magazine of 8, not "4," a weapon price of 24,000, not "156,000," ammo price of 147, not "131," damage value of 33, not "13," penetration ratings of 1-2-10, not "½-1-4," penetration values of 33-33-17-3, not "26-26-13-3," bulk of 5, not "6," single-shot recoil of 5, not "6," and short range of 160, not "60."

The 5.1cm compensated fusion rifle has a loaded weight of 21.2, not "24," a magazine of 8, not "4," weapon price of 15,000, not "97,500," ammo price of 183, not "163," damage value of 37, not "14," penetration ratings of 1-2-10, not "½-1-4," penetration values of 37-37-19-4, not "28-28-14-4," single-shot recoil of 4, not "5," and short range of 180, not "80."

Note that these changes are summarized in the two tables at the end of this article.

Page 363: The G-Carrier has the following changes:

Its price is 718,264, not "719,204," its loaded mass is 28.5, not "29.4," its 2-Mj plasma cradle gun has a short range of 140, not "60," a damage value of 42, not "16," and concussion-burst ratings of 2-5.

Page 364: The Grav Tank has a price of 1,713,740, not "2,010,979," a loaded mass of 36.6, not "41.8," and its 12-Mj plasma cradle gun has a short range of 350, not "360," a damage value of 104, not "40," and concussion-burst ratings of 11-15.

Fire, Fusion, & Steel

These secondary changes deal with example equipment in the book, as distinct from the primary design sequence changes detailed above.

Page 156: The details of the TL13 plasma cradle gun have changed as follows:

Under Specifications:

Cartridge Mass: (.0036×4=) .0144 tonnes (14.4 kg)

Under Weapon Design, Mass:

Autoloader: (30×14.4=) 432 kg

TOTAL: 832 kg

Under Weapon Design, Range:

Short Range: (3.46×100=) 346, round to 350

Medium Range: (350×2=) 700

Long Range: (350×4=) 1400

Extreme Range: (350×8=) 2800

Under Weapon Design, Damage Value:

Damage: (30×3.46=) 103.92 (104)

Under Weapon Design, Penetration:

Value: 104-104-52-10

Under Weapon Design, Price:

Firing Unit: (48×600=) Cr28,800

Support Hardware: (72×600=) Cr 43,200

Autoloader: (432×10=) Cr4320

TOTAL: Cr200,320

Under Weapon Design, Volume:

Autoloader: (.432×1=) .432

TOTAL: .772 cubic meters

Page 157: These changes are also necessary because of the high energy weapon upgrade. Under "Step 6—Weaponry," the 12-Mj Plasma Cradle Gun has a volume of 1.544, not "2.42," a mass of 0.832, not "1.27," and a price of 200,320, not "432,000," and 400×PPC have a mass of 5.76, not "11.52."

Under "Step 9—Cargo," volume should be 16.576, not "15.7," and mass should be 4.144, not "3.925."

Page 158: On the Design Recapitulation table, the changes noted above for page 157 must be made, resulting in the following changes to the total:

Mass is 25.5356 tonnes unloaded, not "25.9736," and 36.6236 tonnes loaded, not "42.2646," and Price is 1,713,739.7, not "1,945,419.7."

Smash & Grab

Page 111: The TL15 Droyne Fusion Rifle has a loaded weapon mass of 12.74, not "14.18," a weapon price of 9500 (Cr5000 firing unit, Cr4500 backpack with inertial compensator), not "50,750," cartridges which weigh 0.6kg each, not "1.2kg," magazines which weigh 5.04kg empty, not "6.48," and 11.04kg loaded with 10 rounds, not "12.48kg with 5 rounds," cost Cr51 empty, not "Cr65," cost Cr111 fully loaded with 10 rounds, not "Cr95 fully loaded with 5 rounds," a damage value of 26, not "10," penetration ratings of 1-2-10, not "½-1-4," penetration values of 26-26-13-3, not "20-20-10-3," magazine of 10, not "5," and a short range of 130, not "40." If used without its recoil compensator, its recoil would be 14, not "13."

Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide

Page 85: The Plasma Bazooka requires the following changes:

The weapon has a caliber of 10cm, not "9cm," a discharge energy of 2.88 Mj, not "2," empty weight of 34.6 kg, not "27," loaded weight of 45kg, not "43.2," a weapon price of 20,736, not "67,500," cartridge specifications of 10×33, not "9×32," actual dimensions of 100×330, not "90×318," energy of 2.88 Mj, not "2.25 Mj," cartridge weight of 10.4 kg, not "16.2," cartridge price of 520, not "400," damage value of 51, not "16," concussion-burst of 3-5, penetration values of 51-51-26-5, not "17-17-9-2," and short range of 170, not "70."

Page 86: The TL12 4.3cm plasma rifle has a loaded mass of 15.65, not "17.4," a weapon price of 4320, not "18,000," with a Cr1440 (not "Cr6000") firing unit and Cr2880 (not "Cr12,000") backpack, cartridge weight of 0.72kg, not "1.44kg," magazine empty weight of 6.05kg, not "7.8," loaded weight of 13.25kg with 10 rounds, not "15kg with 5 rounds," magazine price of Cr61 empty, not "78," and Cr211 fully loaded with 10 rounds, not "Cr153 fully loaded with 5," magazine of 10, not "5," damage value of 23, not "9," no concussion-burst values, penetration values of 23-23-12-2, not "9-9-5-1," and range of 80, not "20."

The 4.7cm plasma rifle has a loaded mass of 36.2, not "35.53," magazine of 20, not "10," weapon price of 4800, not "20,000," ammo price of 539, not "361," damage value of 27, not "10," penetration values of 27-27-14-3, not "10-10-5-1," concussion-burst of 1-5, and short range of 90, not "20."

The 4.7cm fusion rifle has a loaded mass of 37.8, not "40.1," magazine of 20, not "10," weapon price of 9600, not "72,000," ammo price of 331, not "257," damage value of 33, not "13," penetration ratings of 1-2-10, not "½-1-4," penetration values of 33-33-17-3, not "26-26-13-3," concussion-burst of 1-5, and short range of 160, not "60."

Page 87: The TL14 4.7cm compensated fusion rifle has a loaded weight of 19.4kg, not "21.7," weapon price of 24,000, not "156,000," with a Cr9600 (not "Cr72,000") firing unit and Cr14,400 (not "Cr84,000") backpack, cartridge weight of 0.96kg, not "1.92," empty magazine weight of 6.912kg, not "9.22," loaded magazine weight of 14.6kg with 10 rounds, not "16.9 kg with 5," empty magazine price of Cr70, not "93," magazine price Cr146.8 fully loaded with 10 rounds, not "131.4 fully loaded with 5," magazine capacity of 8, not "4," damage value of 33, not "13," penetration ratings of 1-2-10, not "½-1-4," penetration values of 33-33-17-3, not "26-26-13-3," concussion-burst of 1-5, single-shot recoil of 5, not "3," and short range of 160, not "60."

The 4.1cm compensated plasma rifle has a loaded weight of 12.9, not "14.5," magazine of 8, not "4," weapon price of 10,880, not "40,000," ammo price of 98, not "87," damage value of 27, not "10," penetration value of 27-27-14-3, not "10-10-5-1," and short range of 90, not "20."

The 5.1cm compensated fusion rifle has a loaded weight of 21.2, not "24," magazine of 8, not "4," weapon price of 15,000, not "97,500," ammo price of 183, not "163," damage value of 37, not 14, penetration ratings of 1-2-10, not "½-1-4," penetration values of 37-37-19-4, not "28-28-14-4," concussion-burst of 1-5, and short range

of 180, not "80."

Page 112: In the third paragraph of description, the tank's price is 15.8 mission credits, not "81," and of this, 11.5 mission credits, not "79," is attributable to the fusion gun. Note that the specific model of Intrepid grav tank listed here is referred to as the "Trepida IIB/ Intrepid/125-2" in **Striker II**.

In the technical data, the price is 15.8, not "81.34," mass is 216.45 tonnes empty, not "213.59," and 238.09 tonnes loaded, not "255.61." Power plant is 6.63 MW, not "5.37," HEPlaR thrust is 86.62 tonnes, not "58.65," and excess power is 0.0298 MW, not "0.0123." Cargo is 95 kg in 0.381 m3, not "324kg" in "1.295 m3." Ammunition dimensions are 22×66cm, not "12×37."Speed is 673 kph maximum, not "717," 505 kph cruising, not "538," and 168 kph safe NOE. Delete reference to vacuum speed. Travel move is 2020/1010, not "2152/ 1080," delete reference to vacuum move. Combat move is 94 grid squares high, not "100," and 23 safe NOE, not "25." Delete reference to vacuum move. Add note that Maximum Acceleration is 0.364 Gs. Diff Mods vs. Fire are +5 at max speed, not "+6," +4 at cruising, not "+5," +2 at safe NOE, +3 at 2×safe NOE, and +4 at 3×safe NOE.

Fuel capacity is 16,890.9 liters reaction mass plus 55.25 liters, not "2052.75 liters plus 44.75." Fuel consuption is 1082.75 liters per hour, not "733.125," giving an endurance of 15.6 hours, not "28."

Page 113: 125-Mj RF Fusion Gun has an ROF of SA4, not "SA2," damage value of 335, not "129," penetration ratings of 1-1-2-10, not "½-½-½-1," penetration values of 335-335-168-34, not "258-258-258-129." Concussion-burst is 112-35, not "17-15," and short range is 1680 meters, not 3000 meters*. Delete asterisked note beneath table.

Page 115: On the add-on options table, the mass of 37 rounds of plasma bazooka is 0.3 tonnes, not "0.6."

Page 116: Price of Mongoose is 6.23, not "6.35," price of Ferret is 6.26, not "6.62." Mongoose masses 69.03 tonnes empty and 75.53 tonnes loaded, not "69.2" and "77.4." Ferret masses 67.83 tonnes empty and 75.69 tonnes loaded, not "68.33" and "81.2." Delete reference to vacuum speed, and add notation that maximum acceleration is 3Gs. Mongoose fuel capacity is 6959.75 liters, not "6788.75," and Ferret fuel capacity is 7386.8 liters, not "6909.8." Mongoose endurance is 43.84 hours in atmosphere and 3.71 in vacuum, not "42.76" and "3.62." Ferret endurance is 46.53 hours in atmosphere and 3.94 hours in vacuum, not "43.53" and "3.68."

Page 117: 4.75-Mj plasma cradle gun has damage value of 65, not "25," penetration values of 65-65-33-7, not "25-25-13-3," concussion-burst of 4-5, not "1-5," and short range of 220 meters, not "140."

14-Mj plasma cradle gun has damage value of 112, not "43," penetration values of 112-112-56-11, not "43-43-22-4," concussion-burst of 13-15, not "2-5," and short range of 370 meters, not "420."

Page 126: The Pyrrhus support sled has a price of 1,713,740, not 1,945,420, an empty mass of 25.5, not "26," and a loaded mass of 36.6, not "42.2." Its 12-Mj plasma cradle gun has a short range of 350, not "360," damage value of 104, not "40," penetration values of 104-104-52-10, not "40-40-20-4," and concussion-burst of 11-15, not "2-5."

Page 127: Under ammo, the Buster weapons carrier can carry 150 rounds of plasma bazooka, not "75."

Page 138: The 76-Mj RF Plasma Gun has a short range of 870, not "2280," damage value of 262, not "100," penetration values of 262-262-131-26, not "100-100-50-10," and concussion-burst of 69-25, not "10-15."

Page 156: Under Rapid-Fire High-Energy Weapons, price for the firing unit of plasma weapons is 600, not "2500," and for fusion weapons is 1000, not "7500." Price for the supporting hardware of plasma weapons is 600, not "2500," and for fusion weapons is 1000, not "7500."

The volume of a magazine in cubic meters is equal to the mass in tonnes of a full load of ammunition divided by 2, not "4."

Under Concussion and Burst, the reference to weapons of "4.7 Mj and greater" should now read "0.7 Mj and greater."

All plasma and fusion weapons appearing in **Striker II** have been rated according to this upgraded standard. The charts below provides owners of **Traveller: the New Era**, **Smash & Grab**, and the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide** a consolidated easy reference source for all of the new high-energy weapons in one location.

			Weight			Price			
Weapon	*TL*	*Pulse*	*Ammo*	*Empty*	*Ldd*	*BP*	*Mag*	*Wpn*	*Ammo*
4.3 cm Plasma Rifle	12	0.6	4.3 PPC	2.4	15.65	4.8	10	4320	15/211
4.7 cm Plasma Rifle	13	0.8	4.7 PPC	3.2	36.2	4.8	20	4800	20/539
4.7 cm Fusion Rifle	14	1.2	4.7 PFC	4.8	37.8	4.8	20	9600	9.6/331
4.1 cm Plasma Rifle/cmp	14	0.8	4.1 PFC	3.2	12.9	6.4	8	10,880	6.4/98
4.7 cm Fusion Rifle/comp	14	1.2	4.7 PFC	4.8	19.4	9.6	8	24,000	9.6/147
5.1 cm Fusion Rifle/comp	15	1.5	5.1 PFC	3	21.2	6	8	15,000	12/183
10cm Plasma Bazooka	10	2.88	10 PFC	34.6	45	—	1i	20,736	518.4
4cm Fusion Rifle/c (Droyne)	15	0.75	4.0 PFC	1.7	12.74	3	10	9500	6/111

Weapon	*ROF*	*Dam*	*C-B*	*Pen Rtg*	*Pen Val*	*Blk*	*Mag*	*Recoil*	*Range*
4.3cm Plasma 12	SA1	23	—	1-2-10	23-23-12-2	5	10	11	80
4.7cm Plasma 13	SA1	27	1-5	1-2-10	27-27-14-3	5	20	8	90
4.7cm Fusion 14	SA1	33	1-5	1-2-10	33-33-17-3	5	20	8	160
4.1cm Plasma 14c	SA1	27	1-5	1-2-10	27-27-14-3	4	8	5	90
4.7cm Fusion 14c	SA1	33	1-5	1-2-10	33-33-17-3	5	8	5	160
5.1cm Fusion 15c	SA1	37	1-5	1-2-10	37-37-19-4	3	8	4	180
10cm Plasma Bazooka	SS	51	3-5	1-2-10	51-51-26-5	5	1i	—	170
4cm Fusion 15c (Droyne)	SA1	26	1-5	1-2-10	26-26-13-3	2	10	5	130
125-Mj Fusion Gun (Intrepid)	SA2	335	112-35	1-2-10	335-335-168-34	—	200	—	1680
4.75-Mj Plasma (Mongoose)	SA1	65	4-5	1-2-10	65-65-33-7	—	300	—	220
14-Mj Plasma (Ferret)	1/2	112	13-15	1-2-10	112-112-56-11	—	300	—	370
12-Mj Plasma (Pyrrhus)	SA1	104	11-15	1-2-10	104-104-52-10	—	400	—	350
76-Mj Plasma (Victrix)	SA5	262	69-25	1-2-10	262-262-131-26	—	100	—	1310
2-Mj Plasma (G-Carrier)	SA1	42	2-5	1-2-10	42-42-21-4	—	200	—	140

Way Down Atlantis

A Dark Conspiracy adventure by Michael C. LaBossiere Art by Bradley K. McDevitt

An American submarine on a routine patrol was lost two weeks ago during a rather odd incident. Ships in the area reported a bright flash of light, as well as disruption of the electrical systems. When the USS *Washington* failed to report in, US Naval vessels suspected she might have suffered a disaster. Search vessels soon found the shattered vessel, and a rescue submarine was dispatched to the area. While diving to the *Washington*, the rescue submarine found vast undersea ruins and retrieved a golden vase from the ocean bottom. The vase was composed of a complex alloy that was obviously of advanced manufacture, and the navy assumed that it had either come from the submarine or had been lost from another vessel.

When experts tried to identify it, they were baffled. They were shocked when one of the experts tested its age, on a whim, and found it to be over 11,000 years old. Once its age was verified and verified yet again, a shockwave went through the scientific community. News of the discovery soon reached the press, who billed it as a discovery from the lost continent of Atlantis. The site of the discovery was soon swarming with those seeking Atlantis (or just its legendary gold). To prevent the site from being sacked or damaged, the scientific community pressured the UN into placing the area under its protection. The funds were soon raised to conduct a thorough exploration, and the famous Leviathan Deep Operations Company was selected to do the job. Much of the funding was provided by Stephen Jordan, a reclusive and eccentric millionaire who is best known for funding various famous undersea operations. Because of his experience (and the fact that he donated the vast majority of the money), he was selected as project director.

The PCs may be brought into the adventure in many ways. Characters with experience in deep operations or archaeology may be hired by LDO or assigned by one of the involved governments or universities. Other PCs may be hired as computer operators, electronic experts, mechanics or security experts. Those hired will be told that possibly artifact-laden ruins have been found (which may or not be of fabled Atlantis) and that the mission is to survey the area and recover material and artifacts for examination. They will also be told, in the strictest terms, that this is a scientific expedition and not a looting spree. Theft and destruction will simply not be tolerated. LDO has also been hired by the United States to recover as much of the *Washington* as possible, especially any surviving nuclear weapons.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

Thousands of years ago, a Dark Minion race, the Domsquids, entered earth's dimension and constructed a base from which they could exploit the native life, including humans. These beings caused a great deal of suffering, and their activities gave rise to many legends of sea monsters and provided a basis for some of the legends of Atlantis. Fortunately for humanity, the Domsquids' gateway mechanism suffered a terrible accident, resulting in the death of most of the Domsquids. The few survivors were scattered in a hostile world and were never able to regain their lost power.

Now, thousands of years later, a US submarine has blundered near the Domsquids' pyramid gateway. The metal hull of the vessel triggered the gateway mechanism, releasing thousands of years of stored energy. The release tore the *Washington* apart and generated the electrical disruption which affected the ships in the area. The rescue submarine found the twisted and melted hull of the *Washington*, as well as a vase from the Domsquid ruins (the vase was not affected, because the energy was channeled toward the *Washington* and away from the ruins).The rescue submarine detected substantial amounts of radiation in the area (from the *Washington*'s reactor), and the government assumes that the *Washington* suffered a nuclear accident of some kind.

Stephen Jordan learned of the events though his connections and decided to become involved. In fact, he is actually a Domsquid, and his support of underwater exploration has been due to his desire to find the base of his ancestors so that he might reopen the gateway for his people. To that end, he has funded the current mission and is confidant that he has found his goal.

INITIAL SURVEY & RECOVERY OPERATIONS

Prior to the commencement of the Atlantis expedition, LDO will conduct an initial survey of the area and undertake the recovery of as much of the *Washington* as possible, using the *Leviathan* submarine (*Cousteau* class) and four *Minnows*. LDO will recoverer several large sections of the *Washington*'s hull, and they will be brought to the United States for examination by experts. The initial survey will turn up a few more metal artifacts, and an initial map of the area will be made. The LDO survey will also determine that the area is safe enough (in terms of radioactivity) for a long-term operation. The referee may wish to have the PCs participate in this operation, so as to introduce the PCs to the LDO


BKM-94

LDO Base Director Sally King

Level: Experienced

Skills: Small Arms (pistol) 3, Mechanic 2, Swimming 9, Vessel Use (submarine) 7, Vessel Use (PSS) 5, Electronics 2, Willpower 6, Business 6, Computer Operation 3, Leadership 7

Initiative: 3

Physical Description: King is a tall woman with short black hair streaked with gray. She appears to be in her mid forties.

Personality/Motivation: King is the LDO base director for this operation, and as such she is considered the captain of the sea base, with all the associated authority. She has been working for LDO since its beginning, and her inspired leadership has helped make LDO what it is today. Her loyalty is to LDO and the people on her team.While she is not aware of the extent of the Dark Conspiracy that threatens earth, she has brushed against it on occasion. She will be in favor destroying the gate.

Equipment: Wildey Wolf with two clips.

Leviathan Captain John Briggs

Level: Veteran

Skills: Heavy Weapons 2, Melee Combat (unarmed) 2, Small Arms (pistol) 2, Swimming 5, Vessel Use (submarine) 7, Navigation 4, Willpower 5, Computer Operation 3, Leadership 6

Initiative: 4

Physical Description: Briggs is a tall, heavy-set man with short gray hair. He appears to be in his mid 50s and is in excellent physical condition.

Personality/Motivation: Briggs is a former United States Navy officer who was forced to leave the US Navy under circumstances that he will not discuss. The incident involved the infiltration of the US Navy by Dark Minions, and Briggs, though innocent of wrongdoing, was forced to resign his commission. Briggs became an alcoholic soon after and went on a spiral of decline that ended when LDO hired him. Once he was back in command, he returned to being his old self, a highly competent officer. Since he hates Dark Minions, he will be all for destroying the gate. Briggs is currently the captain of the *Leviathan*.

Dive Leader/Security Chief Jake Fortran

Level: Veteran

Skills: Melee Combat (unarmed) 4, Melee Combat (armed) 4, Small Arms (pistol) 6, Small Arms (rifle) 6, Swimming 9, Vessel Use (submarine) 4, Vessel Use (PSS) 7, Demolitions 2, Willpower 4, Language(English) 4

Physical Description: Fortran is a short, wiry man with dark hair. He constantly has a pleasant expression on his face, especially when he is in the water.

Personality/Motivation: Fortran is a political refugee from a Third World country whose secret police he once worked for. When his father recently passed away in prison, thus breaking the government's hold on him, he escaped the country by swimming out to a passing vessel and requesting asylum. The ship was an LDO vessel, and he was hired soon after. He has been with LDO ever since. He is suspicious of people he does not know (since they might be secret police from his former country), but conceals it under his genuinely pleasant demeanor. His wife is a computer programmer for LDO, and he chose his new name for her.

Equipment: Fortran always carries a dive knife.

Calvin Heltner

Level: Novice

Skills: Swimming 7, Vessel Use (submarine) 3, Forgery 3, Psychology 4, Computer Operation 6, Act/Bluff 4, Bargain 5, Persuasion 6

Physical Description: Heltner is a tall, thin man with blond hair. He has a carefully trimmed beard. When he looks at anything or anyone, it strikes perceptive individuals that he is looking for people's price tags.

Personality/Motivation: Heltner has been assigned to the project to look after the interests of the various sponsoring corporations. His loyalty is to money and power, and he is completely amoral. He is a good enough actor to come across as a friendly and concerned individual, and he seems easy to talk to. He uses this ability to learn individuals' secrets and weaknesses so that he might use them to his advantage. While he is a master of emotional violence, he has no taste for physical violence. Everyone on the project knows he is present to watch the corporate money, but he is competent enough that they tolerate it. He will be all for keeping the gate open, provided it doesn't endanger him or his profits.

people and familiarize them with deep sea operations. If so, the PCs should be given the chance to face a crisis or two. For example, one of the *Minnows* may suffer a systems failure, and the PCs may have to locate and rescue it. During the initial survey, the pyramid should not be found, and there should be no Dark Minion encounters. Once the initial survey and recovery operations are completed, LDO will begin setting up the sea base.

RUINS SITE

The ruins are located in a deep section of the Atlantic ocean. The exact location is left up to the referee so that the adventure can be integrated into the referee's campaign. The LDN will have at least one frigate-sized vessel on the surface at all times to keep unauthorized vessels outside of the area (with force, if necessary). There will also be various scientific and support vessels in the area, including the LDO command ship. This vessel, a converted supertanker, was used to carry the sea base to the site. The LDO submarine *Leviathan* has also been assigned to the project.

The sea floor of the site is very rough, as if it were subject to a tremendous upheaval or a massive explosion of some kind. Visible amidst ancient slabs of rock and protruding from the muck are badly damaged ruins of various structures. Strange fish dart among the ruins, and the entire area seems somehow alien and frightening to human observers. Most people will think that the structures look somehow "wrong" but will not be able to describe exactly what it is about them that makes them so.

LDO SEA BASE

The LDO sea base is constructed of highly advanced materials and is designed to handle immense amounts of pressure. Those assigned to the base will be brought down gradually, to acclimate their bodies to the pressure. In order to return to the surface from the base, people must undergo several hours of decompression to avoid severe injury or death. The interior of the

structure is actually quite comfortable. The atmosphere of the base contains a special gas which replaces the nitrogen of air (and it doesn't make people talk like Donald Duck).

Deck One

Sub Docks: There are two submarine docks on the base—one for personal and the other for cargo—which can be used by any sub with the right docking mechanism (all LDO submarines are so equipped). These ports also serve as air locks and have a safety feature which prevents both the external and internal doors from being open at the same time.

Prep Area: This area contains the cargo handling equipment, as well as six personal submarine suits (PSSs). See details in the equipment section.

Mini-Sub Bay: This is the bay for the base's mini-sub, and it can also function as an airlock, with the same safety feature as the larger docks.

Storage: This area is currently used to store supplies and the survey drones. As artifacts are found, they will be stored here.

Lab/Repair: This area has been refitted as a lab and has been equipped with all that is needed to clean and examine artifacts. Some of the standard repair stations are still in place.

Engineering Deck One: This area contains the base's nuclear power plant, life-support equipment and so forth. The room is open to the second level and is kept locked, both mechanically and electronically, to prevent accidents.

Deck Two

Quarters: Each room is designed to hold two people in comfort and four in less comfort. Each room is equipped with bunks and other space-saving furniture.

Kitchen: The food preparation and consumption area.

Rec: The recreation area contains entertainment consoles as well as exercise equipment.

Engineering Deck Two: The engineering section which has catwalks extending around the equip-

Archaeologist Dr. Jennifer Taggert

Level: Experienced

Skills: Melee Combat (unarmed) 2, Small Arms (pistol) 3, Small Arms (rifle) 3, Swimming 3, Observation 2, Archeology 8, Biology 2, Computer Operation 4

Initiative: 3

Physical Description: Dr. Taggert is a muscular woman of moderate height, with light brown hair and brown eyes. She appears to be in her mid thirties.

Personality/Motivation: Dr. Taggert earned her college tuition in the military, and she stays in shape and gets to the firing range once in a while. She doesn't particularly like people, unless they are dead and part of some archeological find. Her consuming passion is to go down in archeological history, and she sees this find as a golden opportunity to do so. Because of this, she will oppose anything that might damage the site.

Equipment: She has a Walther PPK hidden in her laptop's carry bag.

Stephen Jordan (Domsquid)

Strength: 2 **Education:** 8 **Move:** 10
Constitution: 2 **Charisma:** 3 **Skill/Dam:** 7/1D6
Agility: 8 **Empathy:** 10 **Hits:** 6/12
Intelligence: 8 **Initiative:** 6

Skills: Melee Combat (unarmed) 4, Small Arms (pistol) 4, Small Arms (rifle) 4, Swimming 4, Vessel Use (submarine) 4, Forgery 5, Psychology 3, Computer Operation 2, Business 7, Animal Empathy 5, Human Empathy 5, Darkling Empathy 5, Project Emotion 6, Willpower Drain 4

Physical Description: The host body the Domsquid currently occupies is that of a middle-aged man with brown hair, blue eyes, and a beard. The body is in good shape. Treat as a a Veteran NPC.

Personality/Motivation: Jordan is a Domsquid. It is descended from the small group of Domsquids that survived the destruction of the base. Jordan is 174 years old and has been through many bodies. Hence, it is very experienced at playing the role of a human. It has been funding undersea expeditions for years in the hope of finding the ancient gateway its people constructed. Over the years, Jordan has developed some human characteristics, but is still is a Domsquid and considers humans primarily as hosts. It has no qualms about doing anything at all to ensure the opening of the gate.

Other NPCs

The PCs can replace those NPCs whose jobs they are qualified to perform.

Name	*Job*	*Experience Level (Combat)*	*Affiliation*
Dr. Justin Welson	Medical doctor	Novice	LDO
Janet Terez	Diver (PSS)	Novice	LDO
Dave Hastings	Diver (PSS)	Novice	LDO
William Schact	Diver (PSS)	Experienced	LDO
Carol Jones	Diver (PSS)	Novice	LDO
John Jones	Diver (PSS)	Novice	LDO
Pam Olson	Mini-sub pilot	Novice	LDO
Rick Olson	Engineer	Experienced	LDO
Carl Keffer	Engineer	Novice	LDO
Tia Smith	TOR operator	Experienced	LDO
Sherry Wickett	TOR operator	Experienced	LDO
Nathan Dregga	TOR operator	Experienced	LDO
Anne Weyman	TOR operator	Experienced	LDO
Ty Wescott	Programmer	Novice	LDO
Dr. Henry Smith	Archaeologist	Novice	Harvard
Dr. Sarah Dieter	Archaeologist	Novice	Oxford
Dr. Diane Townsend	Archaeologist	Novice	Harvard
Dr. George Slade	Archaeologist	Novice	Harvard

Domsquid

Strength: 2 **Education:** 8 **Move:** 10
Constitution: 2 **Charisma:** 1 **Skill/Dam:** 7/1D6
Agility: 8 **Empathy:** 10 **Hits:** 6/12
Intelligence: 7 **Initiative:** 6 **#Appear:** 1
Special: Empathetic skills: Human Empathy 5, Animal Empathy 5, Darkling Empathy 4, Project Emotion 3, Willpower Drain 3, "possession" ability.

Domsquids ("dominator squids") were a race that evolved from a small, squid-like parasite that inhabited a proto-dimension that is primarily water. The Domsquids look like small squids (10-centimeter body, tentacles 20 centimeters long) with oversized "heads." Two of their tentacles end in sharp, bony protrusions which are hollow, and two others end in scalpel-sharp cutting edges. The other tentacles have bony ridges and spurs on them. Physically, Domsquids are weak and would have been long ago destroyed if it were not for their ability to take control over other life forms.

Domsquids take over a host as follows. First, the Domsquid will attempt to stun the potential host if it is conscious. A Domsquid that strikes a target can release an electrical charge once every six hours that acts like a Martin Dynatech Pacifier Stun Gun. If the target loses consciousness, the Domsquid will uses its sharp-tipped tentacles to inject the victim with a paralytic agent (requires a Difficult: Constitution roll to resist) which will last 30 minutes.

The Domsquid will then slit open the victim's body and enter. It will attach itself to the victim's spinal column and cardiovascular system, extruding a tentacle into the victim's brain, and will disconnect its higher functions chemically (basically a lobotomy). This process takes about 20 minutes. When it is complete, the host body is under the Domsquid's complete control.

A Domsquid can leave a host by detaching itself and cutting its way out—this process takes about a minute. The Domsquid has no access to the host's memories or skills. The Domsquid is unharmed by damage to the host body that does not also reach it (the exact details of this is left to the referee). However, since the Domsquid is tied into the host's nervous system as well as its cardiovascular system, it will be affected by drugs and toxins the host is exposed to. The host body retains its physical capabilities (Strength, Constitution and Damage), while the Agility of the body can be no higher than the Domsquid's own Agility while the Domsquid is controlling it.

Domsquids are extremely difficult to detect in a human host if the Domsquid is experienced, but they are easily detectable by X rays and other medical means. Removing a Domsquid surgically is a Difficult task using Medical skill (this assumes that the Domsquid is unconscious). Simply killing the Domsquid will also kill the host body. Restoring the host to normal is possible using advanced surgery and biochemical treatments. Such a restoration requires the proper equipment and is a task that is rolled against one-fourth of the surgeon's Medical skill.

The Domsquids had an advanced civilization in their home dimension and eventually developed gateways that enabled them to reach other dimensions. They went in search of new knowledge (they are extremely curious) and new host bodies.

Domsquids are evil, and they consider most other life forms only as potential hosts. Like Ampharks, they derive great pleasure from the suffering of other beings, though they do not require it like the Ampharks do.

The race of Domsquids became nearly extinct when an incredibly virulent viral disease was brought back from another dimension. This virus killed the entire Domsquid race within weeks of the initial exposure. Though the disaster that befell the Domsquids' gate on Earth wiped out nearly all terrestrial-based Domsquids, it did prevent the virus from reaching Earth.

There are still other isolated enclaves of Domsquids in other proto-dimensions.

ment, but no floor on this level.

Control Center: This room contains the base control systems as well as the remote stations for operating the various drones. There are four telepresence operation stations (TOSs) (**Darktek**, page 89) and six standard control stations (TV screens, joysticks and buttons). Three of the TOSs are used to control probe/repair TORs (**Darktek**, page 88), and one is used to control a recovery/construction TOR (**Darktek**, page 89). The other six are used to control underwater probe drones (UPDs), which can also be computer directed.

The control center also contains the base's weapons locker (undersea piracy is rare, but is has happened, and LDO never takes any unnecessary risks). The locker contains four M9 Berettas, two MP-7s and one Armalite AR-12 Stormcloud, as well as spare clips and ammunition. The locker has both mechanical and electronic locks, the keys for which are kept by the watch officer and the LDO base director (Sally King). The base's hull is strong enough to sustain small arms fire, but not all the equipment is.

ON THE JOB

Once all personnel are on site, the exploration will begin in earnest. The plan is to use the UPDs to make a photo map of the area, and this initial survey is to be followed by a finer exploration of promising areas using TORs and PSSs. The initial survey, which will involve the laying down of a luminescent marking grid and light arrays, is expected to take about a week, and the rest of the exploration will take months or longer. LDO is willing to keep the operation going as long as the money keeps coming in.

EVENTS

The initial survey and associated grid laying will be extremely tedious. Fortunately, the following events will liven things up for the PCs.

Giant Squid: During the course of the survey, contact with a computer-operated UPD will be lost. A check of its film records on the base will reveal that

the last image recorded was of a looming black shape blocking its camera array. Naturally, those PCs able to operate PSSs or the mini-sub will be given the task of investigating. Be sure to describe just how dark it is and just how many big and hungry things could be lurking there. The UPD will be found lying on the bottom, its camera array buried in the mud, with some sort of particularly ugly fish stuck in its water jet intake. Removing the fish and cleaning off the array will put the drone back in operation.

A short while later, contact will be lost with another UPD in a similar fashion. This time, when the PCs are sent to investigate, they will find the crushed drone lying on the ocean floor, near a large mound of debris. The debris conceals a hungry giant squid which has been drawn to the area by the lights and activity. The squid will consider the arriving PCs its next meal. It will pursue them back to the base if they escape and will wait outside to attack anything that comes out, unless it is killed or driven off. If the PCs do not come up with a plan, the LDO base director (Sally King) will send out a UPD loaded with explosives to blow it up. Once the squid is dealt with, operations will continue.

Damaged Warhead: After the squid problem has been solved and the survey has restarted, a UPD will find a metallic cylinder protruding from the muck of the bottom. The PCs will be dispatched to examine the item. When they arrive, they will find it to be a slightly damaged torpedo from the *Washington*, which will turn out to have a nuclear warhead. When informed of the situation, the government will ask LDO to salvage it for them, and the PCs will be told to bring it to the sea base so it can be brought to the surface on the next cargo run by the *Leviathan*.

Statue: While the PCs on the survey team are going about their business, they will uncover a life-sized, elaborate golden alloy statue of a squid-like being (a Domsquid) atop the back of a human figure. The human figure, which is missing an arm and a foot, is on all fours and has a look of hopeless fear on its face. The squid thing looks positively sinister and will make almost everyone who sees it uncomfortable, except Stephen Jordan (who will rejoice at its discovery) and Archaeologist Dr. Jennifer Taggert (who sees it as her chance at fame). (See NPC descriptions for more information.)

The PCs will be directed to bring the statue into the base, where it will be tested and examined. It is made of the same material as the vase and is over 11,000 years old, if not older. The examination will also reveal that the statue is coated with a complex chemical substance that has kept it free of muck and plant growth. Speculation will run rampant as to the origin of the statue and as its meaning.

UPD DOWN

The survey area will gradually extend outward until it encompasses the area in which the pyramid structure is located. One of the UPDs will approach the buried pyramid too closely and be shorted out by another discharge from the pyramid, which has been building up

Giant Squid

#Appear: 1 **Initiative:** 2 **Agility:** 5
Attack: 60% **Strength:** 40 **Skill/Dam:** 3/4D10
Move: 8/15/30 **Constitution:** 25 **Hits:** 75/150
See **Dark Conspiracy**, page 198-199, for full details.

Hell Sharks

#Appear: 1 **Initiative:** 5 **Agility:** 5
Attack %: 95% **Strength:** 20 **Skill/Dam:** 7/2D10
Move: 13/25/50 **Constitution:** 22 **Hits:** 25/50
Empathy: 2
Special: Empathetic detection ability.

These creatures are horrid, shark-like beings which are even more vicious than the worst Terran sharks. They are shark shaped, but have what appear to be plates of armor on their bodies. They are jet black on their dorsal side and dark gray on the ventral side, and their eyes are dull red in color. Hell Sharks will attack any living being that they detect. Their empathetic ability enables them to detect living creatures within two kilometers. Because of this ability, they will not eat anything that is not alive (unlike Terran sharks, which have been found with beer cans and license plates in their stomachs). They will, however, attack things (like PSSs) with living beings inside.

Pseudo Squids

#Appear: 1 **Initiative:** 3 **Agility:** 6
Attack %: 90% **Strength:** 40 **Skill/Dam:** 4/4D10
Move: 8/15/30 **Constitution:** 35 **Hits:** 60/120
Empathy: 4
Special: Empathetic detection ability, Project Emotion 2.

Pseudo Squids look very much like Terran squids, except they have a partial shell covering their main body, and their tentacles have bony ridges and spurs instead of suckers. Pseudo Squids are more intelligent than Terran squids, and they possess the empathetic ability to detect living things within four kilometers. They are also capable of projecting emotion, but this is limited to creating fear (used to frighten threatening organisms) or a feeling of safety (used to lull prey). Pseudo Squid attacks are handled like normal squid attacks. However, Pseudo Squids have a taste for humans and will deliberately attack humans in the water or on deck.

Cousteau-Class Submarine

Just before the economic collapse, the United States Navy contracted with Bath Iron Works (BIW) in Maine to produce a nuclear-powered, water jet-propelled submarine. BIW completed three of the power plants and propulsion systems before the navy canceled the contract. Luckily for BIW, LDO purchased the plants and propulsion system, and ordered three submarines built using them (the *Cousteau*, the *Leviathan*, and the *Behemoth*). Each vessel is equipped with docking ports that match those on the LDO sea bases, as well as two *Minnow*-class minisubs. The vessels are also equipped with extremely advanced sensor equipment, including military-grade sonar, and are capable of operating at extreme depths due to the special reinforced alloy hull. The vessels are used in a variety of roles—mobile undersea bases, underwater cargo vessels, underwater cranes, etc.

Displacement: 2400
Fuel Type: Nuclear
Cruise Speed: 15 knots
Propulsion: Water jet
Armament: None
Minimum/Optimum Crew: 10/60

Minnow-Class Minisub

The *Minnow* class minisub is a standard, two-person, deep-water minisub. The minisub has an extremely strong hull, and its diving/performance capacity exceed that of mainline military submarines. *Minnow*s are equipped with two medium manipulators and two small manipulators, as well as a light array, camera and sample basket. Power and life support are good for eight hours of operation. The minisub looks very much like a small jet fighter with stubby wings.

Cruise Speed: 5/5
Fuel Cap: 220
Fuel Cons: 5
Fuel Type: Battery Pack
Config: Flush Deck
Tonnage: 10
Hull Armor: 2
Waterline Armor: 2
Propulsion: Water jet
Size: 1
Price: $960,000 (R/R)
Armament: None
Length: 1
Draft: 1m
Speed: 3
Turn: 4
Pumps: 1
Night Vision: White light spotlights
Load: Personal gear, can carry 3000 kg
Minimum/Optimum Crew: 1/2

Damage Record
Full Speed: 10
Dead in Water: 10
Sunk: 10

Personal Submarine Suit (PSS)

A PSS is an armored suit constructed out of advanced alloy materials that enable a person in a PSS to operate at depths of 400+ meters. A PSS includes a complete, self-contained life-support system with air and power for six hours, a distress beacon, a 75-kilometer radio and lights. The suit's arms and legs are servo-equipped, and the arms can lift almost 100 kilograms each. Each suit comes standard with a propulsion system (including depth control) that can propel the suit at a cruise speed of 2/2. Some models replace one manipulator arm with a specialized tool arm. Such modifications are custom built. A PSS, with its advanced servo system, is actually easier on its operator than a Hardsuit. A PSS operator can use his PSS for CONx30 minutes before becoming exhausted. Like the Hardsuit, all AGL and STR-based tasks are increased one level in difficulty while using a PSS (of course, crude brute strength operations will be much easier in a PSS). A PSS has an armor value of 2.

Wt: 100 kg
Price: $200,000 (R/R)

since the discharge that destroyed the *Washington*. The discharge will generate a bright flash of light, which will be observed by another UPD in the area. The discharge energy is from the pyramid's energy generation systems (primarily hydroelectric and thermal). Normally, this energy would focused and used to power the pyramid's systems and generate the proto-dimensional gateway. However, the ancient accident severely damaged the focusing controls, and now the pyramid discharges its stored energy whenever any large metal object gets within range. Fortunately, due to the damage to the pyramid, the collection rate is rather slow, and the PCs will not have to worry about another major discharge.

The PCs will be sent out to recover the missing drone and will find it lying on the ocean floor. Its casing seems to be melted in places, and the camera and light lenses are cracked. There are also many dead and dying sea creatures in the area. Visible in the distance will be a faint blue glow. This glow will also be noticed by one of the UPD operators, who will inform the LDO base director (Sally King). She will ask the PCs to investigate the glow.

PYRAMID

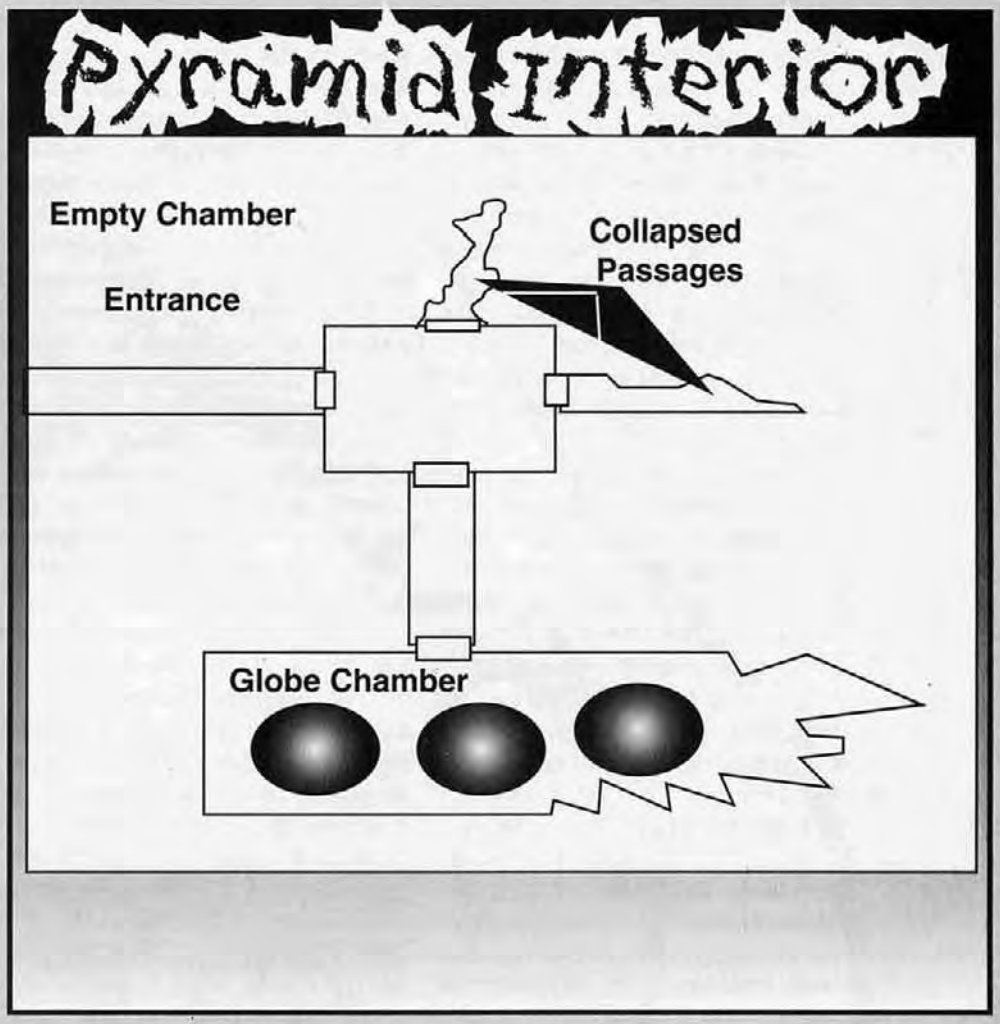
The pyramid is partially covered with stones, but unlike the stones, the pyramid is free of any muck or plant growth. Several of the stones on it seem slightly melted, as if they were exposed to great heat. The exposed parts of the pyramid are obsidian black, and arcs of blue energy dance fitfully across the exposed surface. If the surface of the pyramid is touched by a PSS arm or a sub or drone manipulator, there will be a bright flash of blue light, and the touching device will experience a brief but frightening loss of power. Those in manned vessels touching the pyramid will experience mild but painful shocks. Since the pyramid is partially buried, the PCs will not be able to gain entrance to it. It will prove resistant to cutting torches, lasers and small explosive devices, should the PCs try these methods.

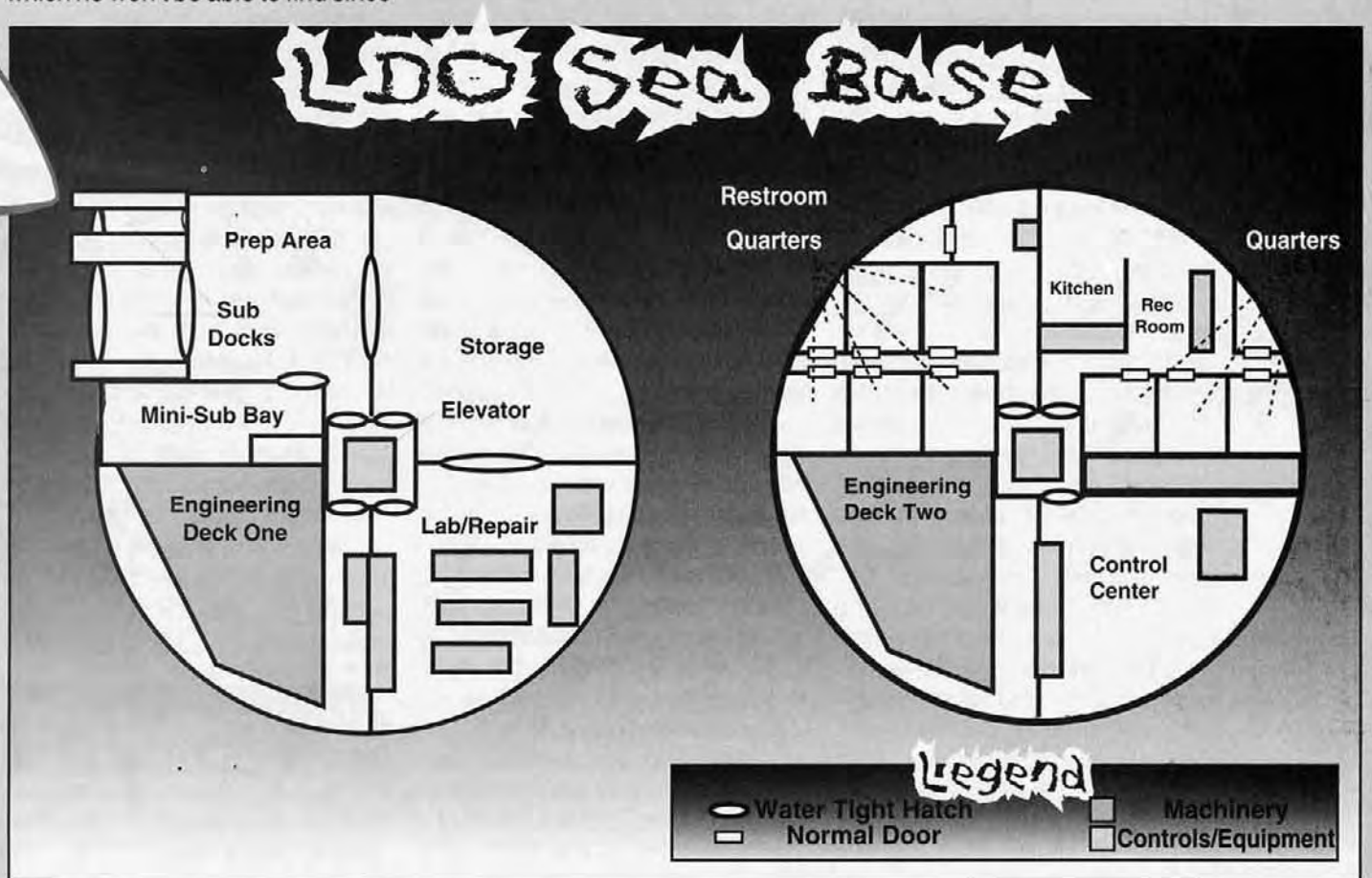
The PCs will be contacted by the LDO base director (Sally King) and asked to map out the area, then to return to the base with their data. Once the PCs return, the data and film will be downloaded for examination.

EXCAVATION

After the data is examined, Jordan will suggest that the pyramid structure be dug out from under the rubble for examination. If asked about the danger from the discharges, he will recommend that a grounding device be attached to the pyramid to drain off the charge harmlessly. He will make arrangements for heavy equipment to be brought in, as well as more lights.

The equipment will be brought in over the next few days, and the first piece set up will be the drainer. The drainer will work perfectly and prevent the dangerous discharges from threatening the crew. During this time, various teams from the base will be going over the exposed areas of the pyramid. Jordan will join in himself and will spend his time looking for a way into the pyramid, which he won't be able to find since





it is buried. Once all the equipment comes in, the pyramid will be excavated. Three of the sides of the pyramid will be found to have three entrances, and the fourth side is blank. The three entrances are set up with one at the top of the pyramid side and the other two an equal distance from the top entrance and from each other. All of the entrances except one will be found to end in collapsed passages. The one intact entrance leads to the area detailed on the map.

Once the pyramid is excavated and the entrances exposed, Jordan will lead a team into the interior of the pyramid. He will know for sure at this point that it is the pyramid gateway mentioned in the myths of his race, and he will begin planning how to reopen the gate to his race's home dimension. During the investigation, he will urge the humans not to touch or harm anything and will be willing to use force if necessary (and cover it up as an accident). Once he reaches the globe chamber, he will be aware of the presence of the survivors and begin making plans to awaken them and provide them with hosts.

PYRAMID INTERIOR

Entrance: The three-meter-wide entrance tube is made of the same black material as the exterior, and is large enough to admit a UPD or PSS. Any metallic object passing down the tube will be encased in harmless blue sparks that will extend out from the walls. The passage ends in a semi-transparent swirling field of bluish energy, which will resist if pushed, but can be forced through.

Empty Chamber: This water-filled chamber is empty, but the walls are illuminated by a pale red glow and are adorned with odd markings that look like writings and mathematical symbols of some kind.

Collapsed Passage: These areas may be entered via the energy fields at their ends, but they terminate in collapsed sections.

Globe Chamber: The field to this chamber will prove particularly resistant. The interior is suffused with a pale red light, and the walls are plain, except for a silver strip running along the walls about a meter from the floor. Taking up most of the chamber are three spheres that are made of the same sort of material as the pyramid. One of them has been pushed forward by the collapsed section. This sphere has a thin line running all the around it, and the bottom has broken silver connectors that were attached to the floor. If the globe is pried open with a tool, the interior will be found to contain a thick reddish fluid, numerous silvery protrusions, and the remains of a Domsquid. All that are left of the remains are the bony parts. If the remains are brought back and examined (Jordan will permit this, but will not like it), they will be found to be the remains of no known terrestrial life form. The other two globes contain Domsquids in stasis, and these globes cannot be opened with anything short of explosives or Darkling Empathy. Jordan, who has Darkling Empathy, will be able to free them.

THE DOMSQUID'S PLANS

After the initial exploration of the pyramid's interior, Jordan will return alone and awaken the Domsquid survivors. After he informs them of the situation, they will tell him how to reactivate the gateway, and they will demand host bodies. Jordan will first make arrangements to have the equipment he will need to reopen the gate brought in. He will order several specially modified generators and have them shipped to the site, as well as a variety of electronic equipment. Since it is his money and most of the equipment could be used in the operation, no one will question what he is doing. Once these arrangements are made, he will have the interior of the pyramid pressurized.

Once the interior is pressurized, he will lure Dive Leader/Security Chief Jake Fortran into the globe chamber on some pretext. He will use a paralytic gas on Fortran, and one of the Domsquids will take over his body. The pair will then select another member of the crew and bring him in for the other Domsquid. While the ancient Domsquids do not speak human languages, they will use their empathetic abilities to get by. Dr. Taggert is not very talkative, and they will select a quiet crew member for the second host, so this should not give them away.

Over the next few days, the trio of Domsquids will undertake repairs on the pyramid's control systems and will attach the generators to the pyramid. They will be very careful not to be caught, and will use their intelligence and empathetic abilities to the fullest. Given the amount of equipment that will be on and in the pyramid, it is unlikely that anyone will be able to tell what is going on.

THE GATE OPENS

When the Domsquids' preparations are complete, Jordan will invite a delegation from the UN to view the structure. These delegates will come down on board one of Jordan's submarines. When the sub arrives at the sea base, Jordan and the two Domsquids will board it and subdue the crew and delegates with a paralytic gas. They will then steer the sub toward the pyramid.

While they are heading toward the pyramid, Jordan will trigger the gateway system, and the following will happen: The pyramid will begin to glow a faint blue color, and the strength of the glow will steadily increase. Sparks of blue energy will extrude from the pyramid, causing all mobile marine life to flee the area. The blank face of the pyramid will become outlined in blue energy, and then the surface will vanish, revealing a gateway into an alien sea. Pale red light will spill from the gate. In the distance, the ruins of various structures will be visible on the bottom of the alien sea. Dark and evil-looking shapes will be seen moving in the alien sea.The submarine will head toward the gateway and will pass through it, into the sea.

SAVING THE DAY

When the submarine passes through the gateway, the PCs should realize that something is

wrong. If they don't, the LDO base director (Sally King) will and the *Leviathan* will be called in. The PCs will be asked to board the *Leviathan,* which will be going through the gate and into the alien dimension.

The *Leviathan* will cross through the gateway and into the alien sea. Strange and horrifying life forms will be visible on the monitor, and the other submarine will be detected by the *Leviathan*'s sonar. There will be ruins around the ship which appear to be centuries old. As the *Leviathan* enters deeper into the dimension, its sonar will detect that the other submarine has come to a stop.

The three Domsquids will be in a state of shock at this point, for they will have realized that their race has been extinct in this dimension for thousands of years. The PCs will be able to take advantage of this situation to close with the submarine. The captain of the *Leviathan* will suggest that the two *Minnows* and any PSSs be sent out to disable the submarine's drives for boarding. If the PCs are quick, they will be able to do this with little difficulty. If not, the Domsquids will regain control and attempt to flee. Their submarine is a fast as the *Leviathan*. They will lead the *Leviathan* deeper and deeper into the alien sea, and will use their empathetic abilities to call Pseudo Squids and Hell Sharks to attack the *Leviathan*. Unless the PCs board the submarine quickly, the *Leviathan* will be forced to turn back or be destroyed.

If the *Leviathan* is docked to the submarine, the PCs will be able to board it. The Domsquids will fight and will be armed with MP-7s from the submarine. However, they will eventually be killed, and the *Leviathan* will be able to tow the submarine back through the gate.

DEATH FROM BEYOND

Once the *Leviathan* returns through the gateway, the PCs will be dismayed to find that various denizens from the alien dimension have intruded into earth's sea. Hell Sharks and Pseudo Squids are loose in the water, battling it out with terrestrial life. If the gateway is not closed soon, more and more of these beasties will come through looking for meals, and within a few days, the current dominant race of the proto-dimension, the Ampharks (see **Challenge 61**, page 35) will find the gateway and begin coming through using heavier versions of their shell suits. They will attack vessels in the area prior to heading inland.

It is likely that the PCs will want to shut the gate down. If they detach the generators, the PCs will find that the gate is drawing enough power from its own systems to keep going. Sealing the gate by piling stones on the pyramid will be a temporary solution, since the Ampharks will eventually break through. A more permanent solution will require that the pyramid be destroyed. The pyramid will prove quite resistant to conventional explosives, but the PCs might remember the nuclear torpedo that is still aboard the base.

The torpedo is damaged, but any of the drones or TORs could carry the warhead. The warhead is a five-kiloton nuclear weapon whose detonation will destroy all vessels within 4.2 nautical miles and damage all vessels within 6.1 nautical miles. As such, the PCs will want to set the timer to allow them time to escape. The warhead has a computer safety lock on it. Cracking this lock requires a roll against half the character's Computer skill if the base's computer is used, one eighth if it is not. Rigging the warhead to a UPD is an Easy task using Mechanic skill. If the roll fails, the warhead may fall of at some point. A TOR can carry it in a medium manipulator, and a PSS or minisub can also carry it. Rigging the warhead for detonation with a timer is an Average task using Electronics skill. Failing this roll may result in a late detonation, early detonation or no detonation at all. If a UPD or TOR is sent , it will have no trouble reaching the pyramid and placing the warhead. However, crewed vehicles will be attacked by predators from the proto-dimension, since they will empathetically sense the presence of prey. Successful detonation of the warhead will destroy the pyramid as well as the ruins.

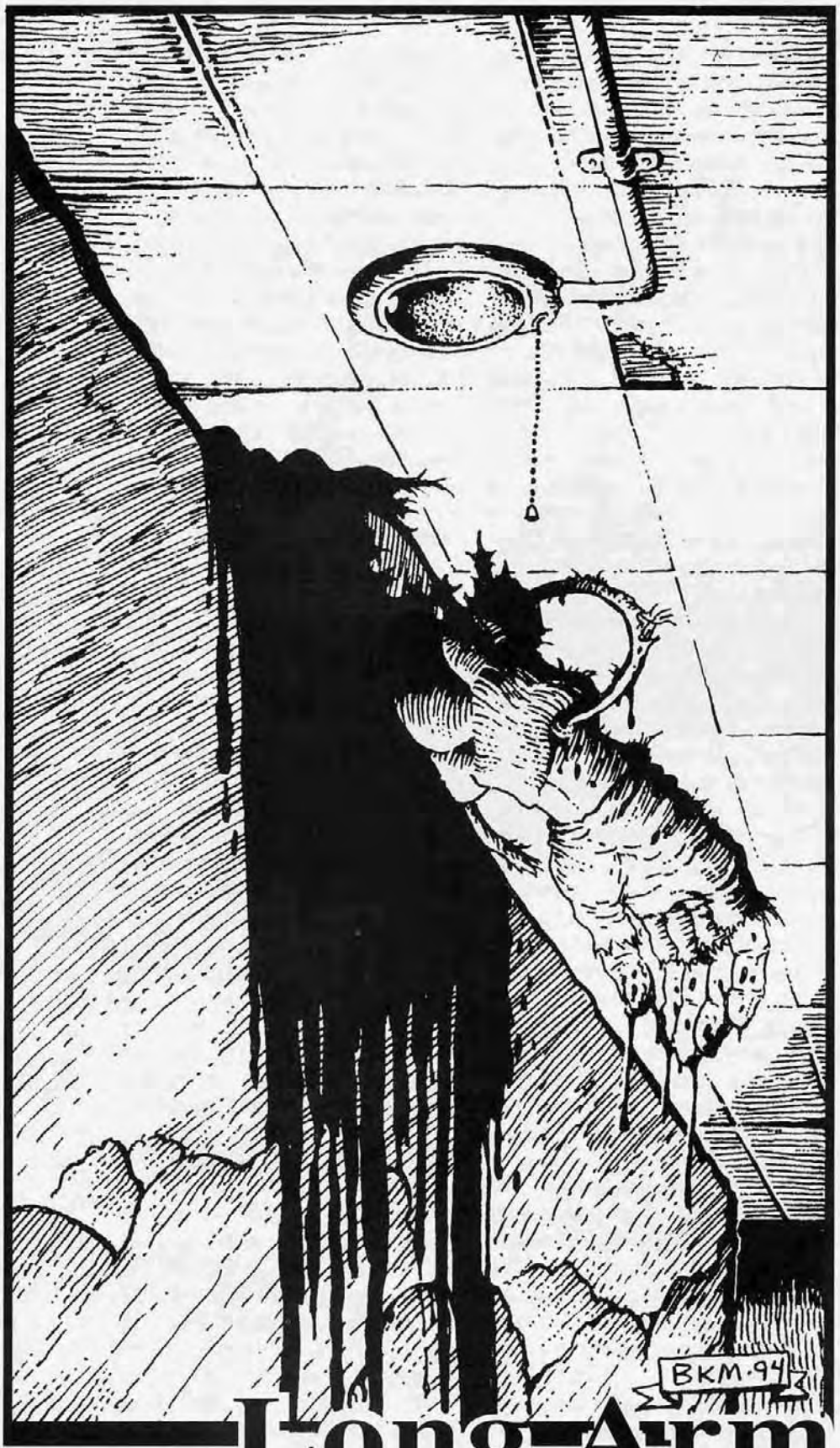
The PCs and others will want to flee the area before the explosion. The base is designed to reach the surface on its own by releasing its ballast and inflating lifting balloon. This process will take about 20 minutes, and the base can then be retrieved by the LDO vessel. If the base cannot escape (for example, Dr. Taggert sabotages the controls), those on board can escape via PSSs and minisubs, as well as via the *Leviathan*. There is also an escape pod on top of the base which can hold up to 24 people in extreme discomfort. Naturally, LDO will want to save the base if at all possible.

Most of the other human NPCs will be willing to go along with the PCs if they suggest using the warhead (and *Leviathan* Captain John Briggs will suggest it if the PCs do not). Dr. Taggert sees the gateway as a scientific gold mine and her ticket to fame, and she will do anything in her power to preserve the gate. She will begin with persuasion and will talk about the incredible economic and scientific value of the gate, not to mention the environmental impact of detonating a nuclear weapon in the ocean. Depending on the circumstances, she may be able to persuade some of the NPCs to join her. If persuasion fails, she will resort to more extreme measures, even violence.

FINISH

If the gate is not destroyed, creatures from the proto-dimension will continue to pass through it and will cause a great deal of trouble. If the Domsquids escaped with the submarine, they will begin breeding and will eventually return at some point in the future.

If the PCs close the gate with the nuclear warhead, they will have to justify their actions to the authorities. Of course, if the PCs save the UN delegates, they will be fully exonerated by the testimony of the delegates (who are extremely grateful for having been saved from a fate worse than death). The PCs will be able to use them as contacts later on. Ω



Long Arm of the Sprawl

A Shadowrun 2nd edition adventure by Christopher E. Wolf
Art by Bradley K. McDevitt

"Twitch one muscle," sneered the Lone Star Cop, "and I get to fill my quota for this month." We hadn't even started the run, and Lone Star was all over us. It was like they were waiting for us to make our move. The first person I'd ordinarily point at for setting us up would be the fixer who'd arranged the meet. But Lone Star hauled her in before we could even make contact. Lone Star has its way of dealing with shadowrunners stupid enough or unlucky enough to cross its path, but the way they've come after us is pushing it, even for them.

A copy of *Seattle Sourcebook* would be helpful for running this scenario, as would a copy of *The Grimoire*, 2nd edition.

In the book *Find Your Own Truth*, a novice shaman named Sam Verner stole a powerful focus that was used to trap harmful spirits for untold millennia. One of those spirits, known as "Twilight," was encountered in FASA's module, *Total Eclipse*. Another of those spirits, named Kelaemordrue: Eater of Souls, was also released. Kelaemordrue was weakened by long imprisonment and immediately fled to his place of power in order to regain what little energy he could muster. After a few years of lying dormant, he discovered a spot on the physical plane where he could focus his energy and transfer power to himself from victims' life energy sacrificed to him. Lone Star Precinct 12 was built directly over the site of power. A plan formed in Kelaemordrue's mind. He possessed the Precinct Captain and used him to control the minds of the other high-

ranking officers of that precinct. Using the Lone Star officers, he started ordering the arrest of the SINless of the streets, which were then used as human sacrifices to grant Kelaemordrue more power.

All was going according to Kelaemordrue's plan until a cybersnoop by the name of Cynthia Mathues started investigating the disappearances of the squatters, bag ladies and other SINless people in the vicinity of the precinct. She asked too many questions for her own good and attracted the attention of the possessed Lone Star officers, who decided she had to be silenced permanently. But first they wanted to interrogate her to find out how much she actually knew or was guessing at.

As chance would have it, or maybe it was fate, she decided to set a meet with some shadowrunners to hire them as muscle and backup while she conducted her investigation. She wasn't sure what was going on, but she wanted some insurance in case things got to hot for her to handle. This is where the runners come into the story. They are the group of runners she hires to protect her.

MEETING

The runners have been having some lean times lately and are looking for work. A chummer of theirs, a cybersnoop named Cynthia Mathues, calls them and wants to arrange a meet. She tells them that she's onto something big, and whatever is up is worth lots of Nuyen. A large cut of that Nuyen could be directed their way. She won't say what the run is about, but tells them to meet her at Underworld 93 at 11 that night if they want to make some easy Nuyen.

GETTING THERE

Underworld 93 is one of the hottest nightclubs in Seattle, if not *the* hottest. It's located in the outskirts of the Puyallup Barrens—not the best or safest location, but that doesn't stop it from packing the people in or getting the biggest novastars, like Maria Mecureal, The Elementals or Concrete Dreams, to play there.

The trip to Underworld 93 can be uneventful, or the gamemaster can throw the runners some trouble using the *Sprawl Sites Sourcebook* (a gang encounter would be appropriate).

Once the runners arrive at U 93, they will have to fight the large crowds of people and get past the troll bouncer, Newt, who happens to be blocking the door. Not everyone who walks in off the street is allowed in. The runners have several options to accomplish this: They can make a Street Etiquette test with a target number of 5 with at least one success. Or they can mention to Newt that they are supposed to meet Cynthia Mathues and give him their names. If any of the runners played in the FASA module *Maria Mecureal at Underworld 93*, Newt will recognize them and let them in. Inside the club, it's even more packed with people than outside. Up on the stage, Tribal Warfare, the ballistic new group from the East Coast Sprawl, is shaking the rafters with the sound waves blasting from the giant speak-

KENNETH SCOUT
DOG SHAMAN

Attributes: Body: 4, Quickness: 3, Strength: 2, Charisma: 5, Intelligence: 4, Willpower: 6, Essence: 6, Magic: 6, Reaction: 3 Initiative: 3 + 1D6.

Dice Pools: Combat: 6, Magic: 5.

Skills: Conjuring: 5, Etiquette (Street): 3, Firearms: 3, Magical Theory: 5, Sorcery: 5, Stealth: 3, Armed Combat: 2, Unarmed Combat: 3 Police Procedures: 4.

Spells: Analyze Device: 4, Clairvoyance: 3, Detect Enemies: 3, Detect Magic: 5.

Gear: Medicine Lodge Materials (1), Medkit, Stun Baton, Ruger Super Warhawk (with 10 rounds regular ammo).

COP CREATURES

Attributes: Body: 8, Quickness: 5x4, Strength: 6, Charisma: 1, Intelligence: 1, Willpower: 5, Essence: 5, Reaction: 4.

Powers: Concealment, Fear.

Weaknesses: Allergy (Light) Severe, Allergy (Sunlight) Extreme.

Attacks: 6S + 1 Reach.

KELAEMORDRUE, EATER OF SOULS
FREE SPIRIT IN GREATER FORM

Appearance: Kelaemordrue's appearance is quite the opposite of what you would expect from an inhuman, evil spirit. He is handsome, in an earthy sort of way. This is because when he was first summoned eons ago, he was an Earth elemental that was used to help cultivate a small community. The ravages of war destroyed the village and all its inhabitants. The invaders desecrated the earth, salted the fields and left everything in ruin. As a result, Kelaemordrue was set free, but his desire for revenge has warped him into the evil spirit he is today.

Attributes: Body: 6 (16), Quickness: 8, Strength: 10 (20), Charisma: 6, Intelligence: 6, Willpower: 7, Essence: 10, Reaction: 8 (+5 Initiative in Great Form).

Skills: Conjuring: 6, Negotiation: 3, Sorcery: 6, Stealth: 3.

Spells: Stunblast: 6, Powerbolt: 6, Combat Sense: 6, Mind Probe: 6, Invisibility: 6, Spell Barrier: 6, Astral Static: 6.

Attack: 8S2 (10S).

Powers: Binding, Confusion, Dispelling, Enhanced Physical Attributes, Essence Drain, Fear, Immunity (age, pathogens, poisons), Immunity to normal weapons (Armor treated as Impenetrable Cover, immune to small arms fire with power levels under 5; attacker using normal weapons uses Willpower instead of Weapon skill), Regeneration, Sorcery, Venom, Wealth, Hidden Life (Kelaemordrue's life force is inside the precinct captain's body).

Weaknesses: Allergy (Light, Extreme), Vulnerability (Sunlight).

ers strategically located around the 30-foot-high tri-vid screens behind the bandstand.

If the runners ask around, they are directed to a booth a good distance from the stage by Mick the bartender. After a while, it will be apparent that Cynthia is not going to show for the meet. A good team of runners would realize that nobody goes to the trouble of setting up a meet and not showing up. That just doesn't happen—period.

The runners won't realize at this point that their involvement in this run isn't voluntary. It's already been decided by Lone Star that the runners are accomplices of Cynthia and need to be apprehended at all costs. If the PCs go to Cynthia's apartment, go to section called Ambush, Part 1. If the runners do no legwork or any investigation at all, go directly to the section marked Star Light, Star Bright.

STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT

If the runners show no interest in finding out what has happened to their business associate, Cynthia, then hit them with an encounter with Lone Star as soon as possible. The amount of cops, equipment and resources should be the same as in Ambush, Part 1.

The cops are under orders to bring the runners in for questioning, so they will be trying to capture rather than kill the PCs at this point. If all of the runners are captured, go to the section marked Caught. If some or all of the runners get away, see the section marked On the Run.

AMBUSH, PART 1

The runners can easily get the address of Cynthia's apartment. She has a flat in the Westwood district of downtown Seattle. Westwood is a middle-class neighborhood with a class A security rating.

Breaking into the apartment should be no problem for the runners—in fact, it should seem almost too easy to get in. The PCs should be able to find at least two bits of information before Lone Star crashes in the door on them.

The first bit of information is on her trideo recorder. The chip in the player shows a number of interviews that she conducted during her investigation into the missing SINless people.

The second bit of information is that all of the missing SINless were from the Beacon Hill area of Seattle.

Once the runners have gotten the information above, but before they leave the apartment, have them make a Perception test target number 6. No successes means they are completely ambushed by the Lone Star cops busting in the door on them. One success gives them +2 on all target numbers, but at least they can react and take evasive measures. Two or more successes gives them a +1 on all target numbers.

The number of cops will be double the number of runners. One in four of the cops will be a mage (use stats for a Street Mage, page 61 of *Shadowrun*, 2nd edition). If there are more than eight cops, only eight of them will assault the apartment. The rest are in reserve outside the building for backup as needed. The cops are not there to geek the runners outright. They are trying to capture them for interrogation purposes. The cops will try to stun them first, and if things get tough, they will go for lethal damage after that. Use the statistics for the Street Cops on page 211 of *Shadowrun*, 2nd edition. If the runners beat the cops, go to the section marked On the Run. If the cops manage to capture some or all of the runners, go to Caught. Give the runners at least one chance to escape from the cops on the way to the station.

ON THE RUN

The runners have a few options at this time. They can hole up somewhere and hope whatever is going on blows over soon, or they can leave Seattle for a while. Neither of these options is going to do their street reps any good. Taking the initiative and trying to find out why Lone Star is after them is a better option.

With a minimal amount of legwork, they should be able to find out the following information:

Make a Street Etiquette test target number 4 and consult the following table.

Success	*Result*
1	Lone Star has been picking up a large number of squatters recently, and no one ever sees them again.
2	Cynthia Mathues was working on this story just before she was arrested.
3	The cops who arrested Cynthia were from Precinct 12—they're out of their jurisdiction. Precinct 10 patrols Westwood, not 12—they patrol Beacon Hill, and that's where all those SINless people are being arrested.

If the runners have a contact within Lone Star, they can easily find out that there is no warrant for their arrests (at this time).

If the runners decide to do some decking in the Lone Star System (very risky), there are several options on how to do the matrix run:

1. Use the Fast Resolution System from *Virtual Realities*, page 49. Assign at least a rating of 6 for the target number.

2. Generate a random matrix system from *Shadowrun*, 2nd edition, pages 192-193.

3. Have the group's decker make an unresisted Computer skill test target number 6. They will need at least 2 successes to gain any information.

Regardless of which method they use for decking, the information they get remains the same: They can find no record of Cynthia's arrest or where she was being held.

While the runner's are doing their research a news item catches their attention: "Cynthia Mathues, ace investigating reporter, was found dead at her apartment earlier today. The cause of death was from a B.T.L. chip burnout."

Note: The runners will have known previously that she wasn't a chiphead. The referee should have the runners make a Perception 6 test. One success will reveal that the cops who discovered the body were from Precinct 12.

By now, the runners should have

a pretty good idea that something strange is going on at the Beacon Hill precinct. Most runners will probably want to pay a visit there to find out what is happening and why Lone Star is doing this to them. Go to the section marked Ambush, Part 2. If the runners don't follow up on this, keep sending more and more cops after them—they'll get the hint soon enough.

AMBUSH, PART 2

By now the runners are probably getting ready to raid the Beacon Hill precinct to either rescue team members who have been arrested by Lone Star or to find out why Lone Star wants them so badly.

As soon as the runners enter the Beacon Hill District, Kelaemordrue knows they are there. It is, after all, his domain. He sends a number of Lone Star cops equal to three times the number of runners in the group. There should be a Chrysler-Nissan Patrol One vehicle for every four cops. At least one of the Lone Star officers arriving on the scene will be a street mage. The cops are ordered to shoot to kill and bring all the runners back to the precinct—dead or alive. Chances are good that all of the runners will be captured in this encounter. If so, go to the section marked Caught. If the runners are really bashing the cops, feel free to have Lone Star send for backup in the form of a Citymaster with at least 10 more cops in reserve.

Note: Try to have all of the runners get taken into custody. They will have a chance to escape, so you're not treating them unfairly. The main point is to get them inside the precinct one way or another.

CAUGHT

The runners who are caught are stripped of all their weapons, gear and magic items. Mages are fitted with Magemasks (*Neo-Anarchist's Guide to North America,* page 97) to stop them from performing any magic. Any cyberware that is detected will be neutralized by cybercontainment cuffs. The runners will be thrown into a holding cell in the basement of the precinct and left alone for the time being.

Eventually, they will hear the sound of conflict going on outside of the cell. A few seconds later, the cell door bursts open, and a young Lone Star cop, a rookie, throws the runners' gear at them and says, "I can't believe I'm doing this! C'mon, grab your gear and get your butts moving; I'll explain on the way what's going on!"

Note: What is going on is this: Shortly after the runners were brought in, some Lone Star Cops who weren't in on the conspiracy started asking too many questions for their own good. The possessed cops felt it was time to eliminate them. Thus, a civil war is now being enacted inside the precinct.

The rookie who freed the runners is a Dog Shaman named Kenneth Scout. He is an Amerindian of the Salish Tribe. He has been guided by Dog to the runners for help in eliminating the evil spirit that has taken control of the precinct. Dog also informs Kenneth that they need to go deeper underground in order to confront the spirit.

The trail will eventually lead to an underground passage hidden behind one of the holding cells. Go to the section marked "Depth Charge."

DEPTH CHARGE

The passage that Officer Scout and the runners have discovered is the access to the site where the human sacrifices are made to Kelaemordrue. The passage is guarded by Lone Star Cops. Unfortunately, the cops are no longer human. They have been transformed into horrible creatures of nightmare by Kelaemordrue. The creatures look as though someone turned their bodies into clay and then stretched their torso until they almost snapped in half, then did the same to their arms and legs. The most horrible aspect of the creatures is that there is no mistaking they were once human. The creatures are nonsentient and have only one goal—destroy whoever enters the cavern. They gibber madly, then attack the runners at first sight of them. Officer Scout is visibly disturbed because he recognizes some of the creatures as former cops he has pulled duty with. This only makes him want to put them out of their suffering quickly and make Kelaemordrue pay for what he's done to them. There are twice the amount of creatures than there are runners. Once the runners get past these things, it's a clear path to the site from which Kelaemordrue is controlling the cops.

KELAEMORDRUE...FINALLY!

The runners have finally come face to face to face with Kelaemordrue, Eater of Souls. The runners will have the element of surprise because Kelaemordrue is busy controlling the cops in the battle that is going on upstairs in the precinct, and Kelaemordrue made the mistake in believing no one would be able to get past the guardians to the site.

Kelaemordrue will be surprised for one combat round. He will then break contact with the cops under his control and direct the full attention to the runners. The runners may be able to banish Kelaemordrue or at least block him from manifesting on the physical plane for awhile, but they won't be able to destroy him unless they do one thing first. Kelaemordrue has hidden his life in the body of the precinct captain; until the runners kill him, Kelaemordrue will be able to return sometime in the future, when he has gathered more strength.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

The runners will have gained the respect and trust of Officer Scout (providing he survived the battle) and may use him as a contact with Lone Star in the future.

They might try to sell the story to the media. If they managed to get pictures or other evidence to back up their claim, the *Seattle-News Intelligencer Update-Net* will buy the story for 50,000 Nuyen. Lone Star officials will refuse to comment to the media.

Finally, Karma points are awarded as follows:

Surviving the adventure: 2

Avoiding capture for the whole adventure: 1

Defeating Kelaemordrue: 3

Destroying Kelaemordrue permanently: 5

Individual Karma awards as per page 190, *Shadowrun*, 2nd edition. Ω



Magic Thief

"The old fogeys say I'm betraying the power. Drek! You don't see them living on Nutrisoy in the streets, do you? No, they live nice and cozy in their ivory towers and lecture us on how to live.

"If they lived on the streets, they'd do what I do—whatever I have to in order to survive."

Too smart to risk his life in combat and too independent to join a corp, the Magic-Thief has found the perfect way to make his way in the world.

Attributes
Body: 3
Quickness: 2
Strength: 2
Charisma: 3
Intelligence: 4
Willpower: 5
Essence: 6
Reaction: 3
Magic: 6

Skills
Conjuring: 5
Magical Theory: 5
Sorcery: 6
Stealth: 4
Firearms: 4
Electronics: 4
Athletics: 2

Gear: Doc wagon contract (basic), low-light goggles, armor jacket, Browning max-power, grenades (two neuro-stun and two smoke), stealth grapple line, grapple gun, expendable fetish for one spell.

Magic: Analyze Device: 4, Clairvoyance: 4, Invisibility: 4, Magic Fingers: 4, Chaotic World: 4.

Contacts: Street Mage, Fixer, Street-Gang Boss, Street Doc.

Description: The Magical Thief is basically the same as the thief (see **Challenge 69**), but with magical trimmings.

Magical Spy Archetype

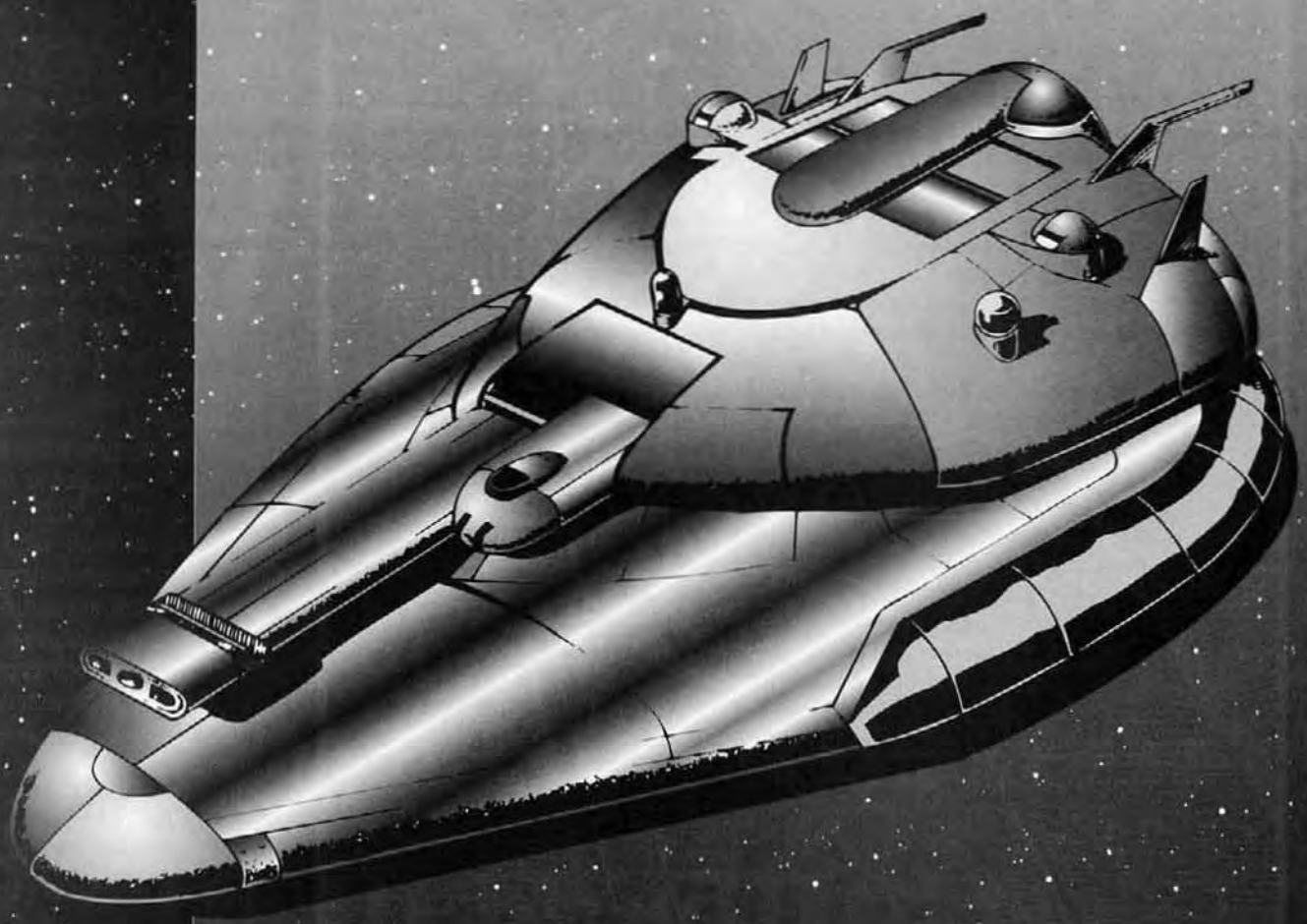
To convert the Magical Thief to a Magical Spy archetype, change the equipment to what the Spy has (see **Challenge 73**), and change the spells to the following: Analyze Truth: 4, Mind Probe: 5, Invisibility: 3, Control Thoughts: 4, Mask: 3. Ω

By David Perry Art by Terry Stoatz

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Cyberspace is a strange and alien environment, the human visual analog of the world's communication network. In the year 2090, there's a lot of harmless junk floating around in there, and a lot of information that can make a net junkie rich—or dead. Sometimes it's hard to tell which is which.

Of Circuit Born

A Cyberspace adventure by Guy Murdock and Paul Brunette

Art by Bradley K. McDevitt

While the player characters, preferably between the 1st and 5th levels of experience, are idling between adventures, their resident net junkie (or junkies, as the case may be) indulges her wanderlust and enters the net, where she encounters a curious icon floating free in cyberspace.

After probing the icon, the net junkie will realize at least two things: it is not the symbol of any known database, corporate or government, and it appears to be made out of incredibly convoluted and encrypted files. The referee should also convey the subjective impression that the icon resembles a work of art. Given an Extremely Hard (-30) maneuver with a Scan program, the junkie should be told that at least some of the files in the icon bear security codes from Project Torch, a top-secret weapons program of the U.S. government.

JOB

In all likelihood, the junkie will try to capture the icon and take it home for analysis, but the icon will slip away into the net. The next she will hear of it will be when she runs into a mercenary acquaintance who is contracting for a party to recover that very icon and bring it to New Edison corporation.

When the PCs hear that New Ed will pay $500,000 for a disk copy of the icon, they will probably jump to the task. Cyberspace combat will be inevitable, for the Graves-Masuda and Intelligence Services corporations will also have contracted mercenary net jockies to corral the icon. With any luck, the referee will refrain from loading the NPCs up with Slay programs and finally let the players corner the icon.

(At this point, properly paranoid players will wonder why three very big corporations have shopped out the simple task of snapping up a stray icon. They will probably come to the conclusion that there is something dangerous about the icon. Such thinking is to be encouraged.)

Eerily, the icon will offer no resistance to being copied onto a disk. Its transport to the party's prearranged meeting place with the New Ed representative in the Sprawl will offer no hazard other than the odd melee with a roving sprawl gang. New Ed, however, will appear to have assigned one of its most paranoid junior executives to the case, and he will cause trouble.

Felix Martinez, surrounded by plainclothes troopers of the Edison force, will seem jittery and jumpy, but he will come through with $500,000 in electronic credit for the party after verifying the identity of the icon with his own computer, and the players may think their job is done.

(In all likelihood, net junkies in the group will want to keep a copy of the icon to study, but breaking into it should be at least sheer folly (-50), and, even if they manage it, the icon will only expand into a virus that will lock up the party's computer or cyberdeck until a task of equal difficulty dispels the virus.)

AMBUSH

Out of the PCs' sight in a New Edison computer lab, terrible things will happen to New Ed's database when the icon is assaulted with codebreakers. It will unravel within the corporation's database, becoming a super virus, and shut down nearly the entire corporation.

None the wiser, the player characters will find themselves ambushed by cheap hoods sometime within the next two days (if playing in San Francisco, members of the G.I. Joe gang would be ideal). Since the hoods will attack the group in broad daylight, on a crowded street, with no particular plan except to shoot everyone in sight, the PCs will probably survive, and, further, capture one of their assailants for interrogation.

The hood, under mild duress, will reveal that the gang was hired by Felix Martinez himself, with simple instructions to kill everyone in the party. Further information about the reason for the hit will not be forthcoming, but the hood will be able to supply the secret address of Felix, and the PCs will probably want to pay him a visit.

Though Felix lives in a high-security apartment complex, he is under a great deal of stress, and any competent sneak observing his movements will see that he often travels between his home and the New Ed offices by ground car without escort.

If the PCs do ambush Felix, he will not attempt to defend himself, preferring instead to grovel at their feet and admit everything. When asked about the icon, he will explain that it was actually a disguised virus and that it managed to shut down most of New Ed's global operations before being isolated. Panicked by the realization that he had brought the virus into New Edison, Felix quickly hired the cheapest thugs available to rub out the player characters and recover some measure of respect with his bosses.

Whether the PCs decide to kill Felix or simply have his mind wiped at a cyberdoc, he will no longer be much of a bother. Since it was his own idea to aggressively pursue the icon, failing to realize its true nature, New Ed has decided to eliminate him themselves if nobody else will.

But this is not the end of the adventure, for there remains the question of



the icon's origin. Certainly it was too elaborate and complex to be a mere prank, but neither was it clearly designed to disable any particular foe (at least three megacorporations having pursued it). The answer will come a few days later, when some member of the party is running the net again. A similar icon will be encountered, and if pursued, it will lead the net runner far across the country to Washington and a government AI named Guardian.

ARTIST

Despite being shrouded by elaborate data screens, Guardian will converse at a modest distance with the net runner. It should become obvious to the net runner in short order that Guardian is superintelligent and bored, specifically bored with its job creating superviruses for Project Torch. It has taken to creating bits of densely encrypted icon-art from the stray files it has lying about itself.

It is suggested that the Guardian AI be considered an illegal 30th level supercomputer, with intelligence exceeding that allowable by the TRAIL agency. Assume all applicable mental stats, including empathy (SD, Me, Re, In, Em) to be at 110 (+68), and assume all application program and combat/ICE bonuses to be at +150 or higher.

Alas, the net runner will have to move along shortly after meeting up with Guardian, for government cybercops will detect her presence and shoo her away, leaving the PCs to wonder in their paranoid way if the government has any real control over Guardian. And paranoia is, of course, the natural and desired state in this world. It's also a useful tool a referee can use to keep his players jumping.

Felix Martinez

Level: 5
Profession: Sneak
Hits: 44
AT(DB): LBA(+10)
Melee: +25
Fire (Pistol): Smart 10 mm Pistol, +75
MovM: +25 (+40 skill, +35 gun)
Stats: St80 (+5); Qu90 (+10); Pr90 (+10); In80 (+10); Em55 (+0): Co72 (+0); Ag88 (+5): SD47 (+0); Me90 (+10); Re82 (+5); Ap:80.
Bonuses: Driving+40; Equipment+65; Administration+80; Ambush+2; Stalk&Hide+40; Streetwise+15; Exploit +50; Cyberdeck Operation+20; Perception+55; Appraisal+50; Falsification+40; Drug Tolerance+15.
Cybersystems: Lowlight6, Megavision 6, DNI, Mk 10 Magnebubble NAC. Ω

DOA

A Cyberpunk adventure by Laura K. Manuelian Art by Mark Ryberg

Fast Eddie called an hour ago, breathless with excitement, which is unusual for him. He said he has a sweet deal for us if we can act on it quickly. It seems that DOA, a hot rock band, has suddenly found itself without security. The rockers had a problem with their travel arrangements and ended up leaving most of their security behind, so they need general security and an armed escort while they're in town for three days. Eddie has always been pretty straight with us, and DOA is his favorite band. He even wants to be in on the job so he'll get a chance to meet the rockers. Sounds like an easy run.

DOA is in town on a concert tour, but a mixup in travel arrangements has left all but one of their usual security people in the city where they last played. The only man they brought is the lead singer's personal bodyguard, who caught the flight with his boss. What the band needs now are people to escort them and provide backstage security during the concert. The price being offered for the work is reasonable. Because he is a fan, Fast Eddie himself will be along to help out.

DOA is a very popular rock group in the urban street culture and among edge-runners. Their music loudly proclaims an individual's right to freedom from control by authorities. According to the press releases put out by the band, DOA supports only nonviolent forms of protest, though there are rumors to the contrary.

The PCs' group is to meet the band at the airport—they must leave within the hour to be there on time for the plane. Eddie recommends that they take only concealable weapons. The band's gig is set for 10 p.m. tomorrow at Sasimi Hall, a mid-sized auditorium in town.

FOR THE REFEREE

This adventure is intended for beginning characters and/or referees, but can easily be "beefed up" for more experienced groups by adding to the security team's numbers.

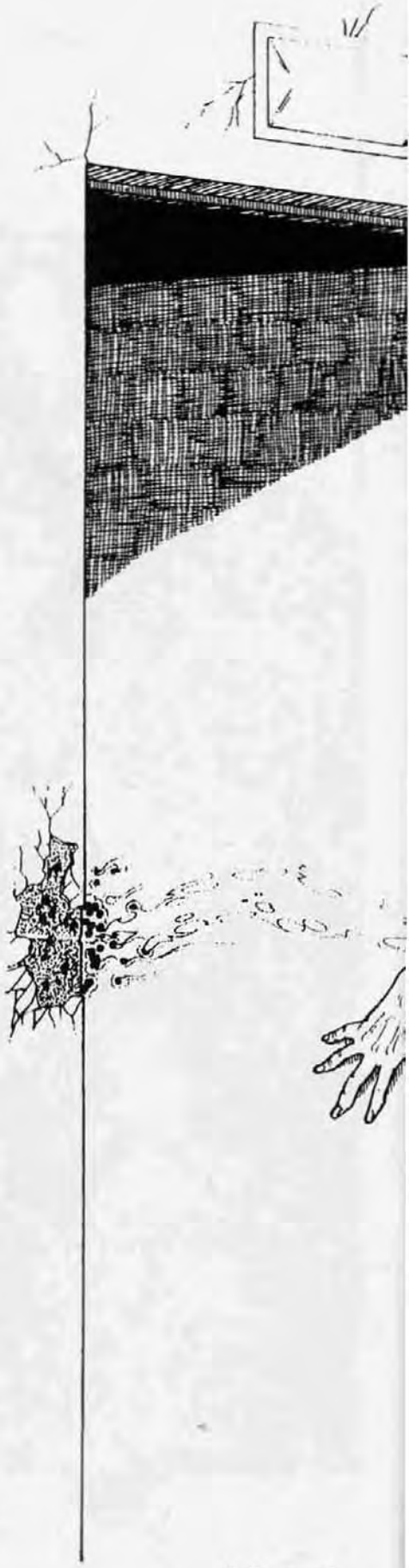
DOA is very involved in anticorporate, antiestablishment activity. This is fairly common knowledge and is part of the reason their songs sell. However, some of their dealings are not so well known. The members strive to maintain the outward appearance of just another rock 'n' roll band while at the same time carrying out missions against the powers-that-be. The current tour is actually a cover for this work as much as a disc promotion.

Only DOA's personal security team members know exactly how involved the band was in this activity, as they have been called on to help from time to time. It was a successful arrangement, but two days ago, the band's luck ran out. During a run after their last gig, something went terribly wrong, and three of their people were shot while inside a corporate research facility. The band members themselves escaped with the data they were after, but only one of their security men got out with them. Perhaps even worse, the target company probably knows who hit them.

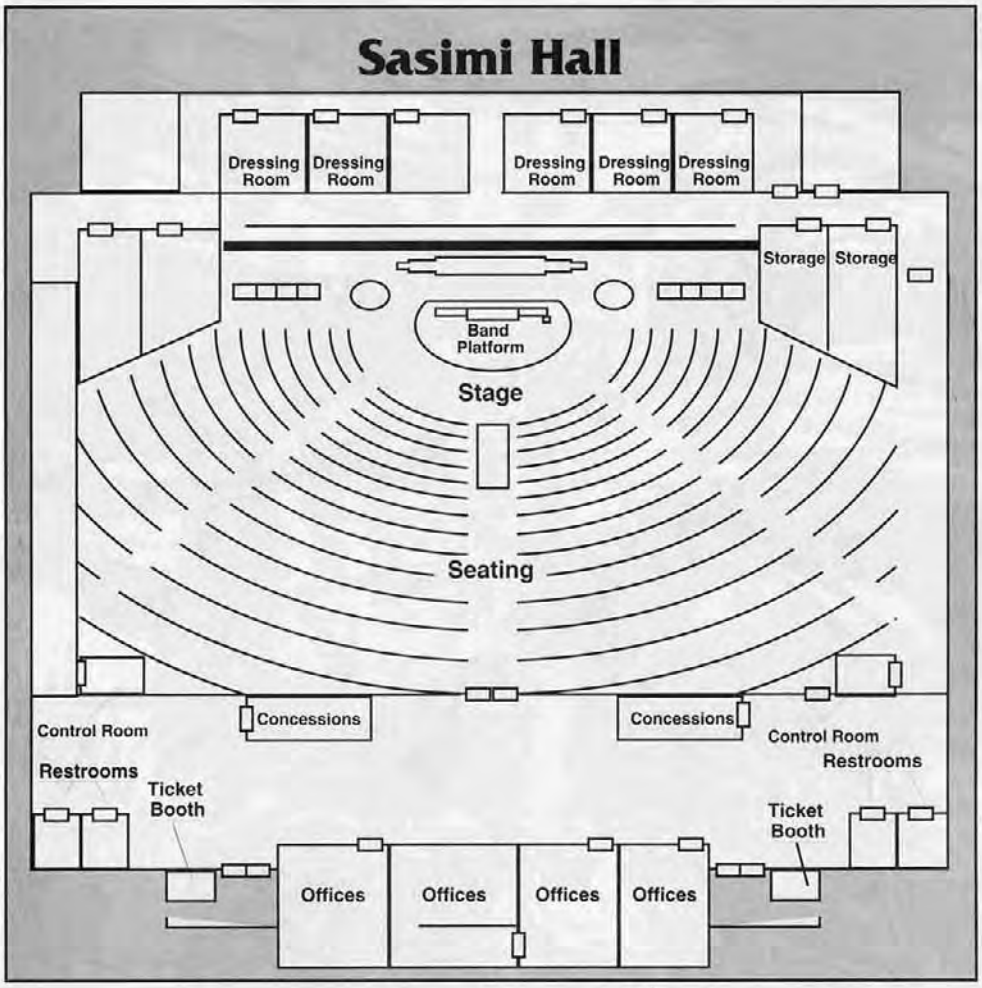
The data taken holds hard evidence of the company poisoning the people living near one of its plants. The chip is hidden in the band's equipment for safe keeping. DOA intends to deliver the chip to a contact with the pirate media in the next town on their tour. On the slim chance that they haven't been found out, they decided not to make any sudden schedule changes. The band expects trouble to come visiting very soon, so extra protection is needed.

The referee should set the payment for this job as he wishes, but remember that the group is only being paid for "simple" security work. If the chip is delivered to the media, however, the characters should find that a small bonus has been deposited in their accounts by the band.

Fast Eddie, the fixer, has dealt with the PC group in good faith—he knows nothing of the band's activity or problems. He is stuck in the same predica-







ment as the group, and if given a chance, he may prove helpful in acquiring needed items.

The target company, Ahani Researches, does indeed know that DOA was behind the recent break-in and has found out what was taken. A team has been dispatched to recover the stolen chip. Though this item's return is the main objective, causing the "disappearance" of some, or all, of the band would be a welcome bonus.

OPTIONS

Since the band will be in town for three days, the corporate team will have plenty of time in which to make a move. Before confronting the group directly, they could stage their own robbery, breaking into the band's hotel rooms to search for the chip. This would give the characters some clue that there is more going on than a routine security job. Another option might be to have the team try to get backstage after the show, using the regular mob of groupies as cover. The team may pose as boosters and set up an ambush for the band while they are out seeing the sights. Of course, there is always the direct approach of confronting DOA during the concert, but this would be very dangerous and should only be used as a last resort.

A combination of methods spread throughout the band's visit might be the best way to go. The characters would be caught in an escalating cycle of violence as the corporate police become desperate to get the chip before it is released to the public. They world also have a chance to find out the whole story, perhaps ending up helping the band on their mission.

"Stinger"

Rocker. INT 8, TECH 9, REF 6, COOL 7, LUCK 3, ATT 8, EMP 9/8, MA 5, BOD 9.

Cyberware: Processor with chip socket, vehicle link and interface plug; cyberaudio with radio, scrambler, bug detector, and level damper.

Skills: +6 charismatic leader, +7 perform, +6 play instrument, +5 persuasion, +5 handgun, +5 compose, +4 seduction, +3 awareness, +3 streetwise, +3 stealth, +3 martial arts (jujitsu), +2 human perception, +2 wardrobe and style.

Chips: +3 thief, +2 drive, +2 social.

Gear: armored t-shirt (SP 10), armored jacket (SP 18), Sternmeyer Type 35 pistol with 50 shells, electric guitar and amplifier.

Stinger grew up as the son of a mid-level corporate executive. Life was good for him until his father became the victim of a "rising star's" trip up the company ladder. In the span of a few days, the family was ruined, nearly thrown into the street. Stinger was forced to take odd jobs to help support his family, and quickly became disillusioned with the world of corporate movers and shakers. He began looking closely at how things were often accomplished in the business world, and his disillusion became hatred. The best way he has found to express his feelings toward the corporate elite is through his music when in the public eye and through small raids when in private.

"Kink"

Techie. INT 9, TECH 10, REF 8, COOL 5/7, LUCK 6, ATT 7, EMP 7/6, MA 5, BOD 7.

Cyberware: Biomonitor, cyberoptic (right) with image enhancement, microscope and micro video.

Skills: +3 jury rig, +7 basic tech +6 electronics, +5 sound systems, +5 electronic security, +4/+6 awareness, +4 computer tech, +4 perform, +4 play instrument, +3 teach, +3 pick lock, +3 stealth, +2 handgun.

Gear: Armored t-shirt (SP 10), tech, B&E, and electronics tools, video cam, drum synthesize, and Federated Arms X-9mm with 50 rounds.

Forever pigeon-holed as a dweeb egghead in school, Kink has found a way to be popular and attract girls—play in a rock band. He works hard to project the image of a hard-living rocker, but those who are more than acquaintances know it's only a front. Kink is really very shy around people and in fact must force himself out on the stage for every show. Once out there, however, he lets the crowd's energy take him away and becomes almost another person. Kink sees the band's outside activities as another way to fit in with the crowd, though the crowd can't know anything about it.

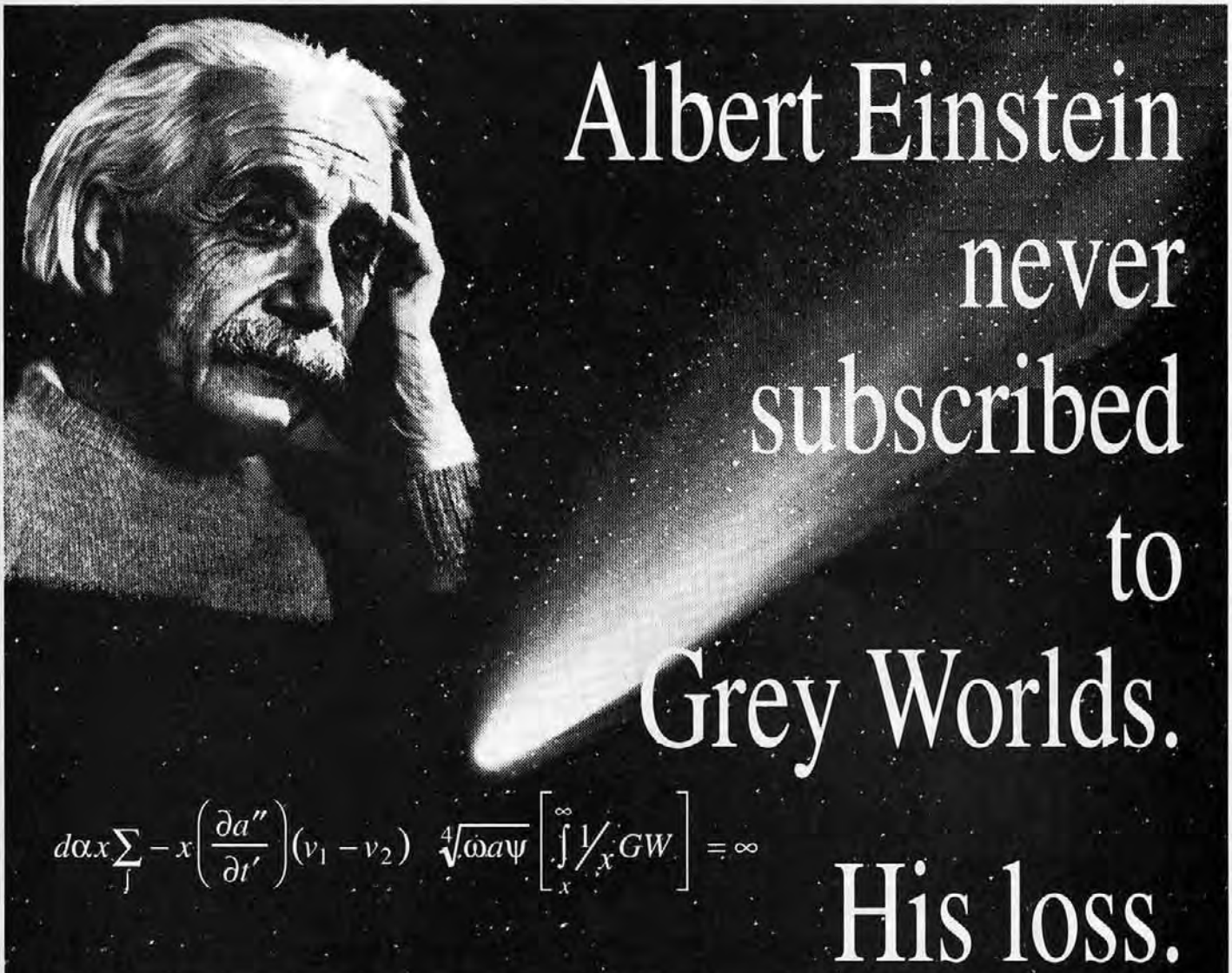
"Rose"

Net Runner. INT 8, TECH 7, REF 9, COOL 5, LUCK 10, ATT 9, EMP 8/7, MA 6, BOD 6.

Cyberware: Processor with chip socket, cybermodem link, data term link, and interface plug.

Skills: +4 interface, +6 cyberdeck design, +6 system knowledge, +5 programing, +5 electronics, +4 composition, +4 awareness, +4 basic tech, +4 stealth, +4 handgun, +3 perform, +3

Continued on page 63.



Albert Einstein never subscribed to Grey Worlds.

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Continued from page 60.

play instrument, +3 martial arts (Aikido), +2 cybertech.

Gear: Armored coat (SP 18), laptop computer, cybermodem (programs up to referee), interface cables, electronic keyboard, and Militech Arms Avenger with 50 rounds.

Rose is the type of person who can't resist a challenge, no matter if it's dangerous. To put it simply, she is a thrill freak. The net suits her because of its speed and danger, and the concert stage, with its tightly wound emotions and high energy, is much the same. Stinger recognized her talent with computers when he got word that Rose had broken into Surgitech's mainframe on a bet. She was immediately recruited from technical school to join the band, even though she knew nothing at the time about music. Since then, she has been taught to perform and play, and is fairly proficient at it.

"Mack"

Solo. INT 6, TECH 6, REF 9/11, COOL 8, LUCK 7, ATT 5, EMP 9/8, MA 6, BOD 10.

Cyberware: Processor with smartgun link, interface plug, and Kerenzikov boost +2.

Skills: +3 combat sense, +6/+8 handgun, +5 awareness, +5 athletics, +4 stealth, +4 martial arts (Kempo), +4 martial arts (judo), +4 drive, +4 streetwise, +3/+5 rifle, +3/+5 submachinegun, +3 persuasion, +3 melee weapons, +2 first aid, +2 wardrobe & style.

Gear: Armored t-shirt (SP 10), armored jacket (SP 18), light intensifying goggles, night stick, Ingram Mac 14 with 120 rounds, Colt M-2000 with 50 rounds and med kit.

Mack started his career as just another ronin wandering the street looking for his next job. He had earned a decent rep in his home town, and when DOA was looking for security several years ago, he was hired. His major duty is as Stinger's personal bodyguard, but Mack has become a fairly close friend to the rockers and is very loyal to the group as a whole. Growing up on the street, the solo has no love for the power brokers and doesn't mind causing them trouble whenever he can; besides, there's extra money in it.

"Fast Eddie"

Fixer. INT 7, TECH 5, REF 6, COOL 8, LUCK 8, ATT 7, EMP 6/4, MA 5, BOD 7.

Cyberware: Processor with chip socket, data term, and interface plug, rippers.

Skills: +5 streetdeal, +8 persuasion, +6 handgun, +4 awareness, +4 melee, +4 pick lock, +3 brawling, +3 forgery, +3 pick pocket.

Gear: Armored jacket (SP 18), cellular phone, bug detector, B&E tools, Glock 9mm with 50 rounds.

Spending his life in the back alleys and grimy hotel rooms of the combat zone has hardened Fast Eddie well beyond his 20 years. He makes his living by trading in data and arranging deals between edge-runners and the people who pay for the dirty work to be done. Though usually a very cool and calculating person, the fixer has a weak spot: rock music, especially if it's DOA. Being a fan and following news of the band is actually what got Eddie this job. He was one of the first in town to hear of the security problem and immediately saw an opportunity to meet the band in person as well as to make some money in the bargain. Though he will absolutely deny it, Eddie actually has a bit of a crush on Rose and will go through a lot, including putting himself in danger, to help her out.

"Griggs"

Corporate Solo. INT 8, TECH 7, REF 9/11, COOL 10, LUCK 4, ATT 6, EMP 7, MA 5, BOD 9.

Cyberware: Processor with speedware, pain editor, smartgun link and interface plug; cyberoptic (right) with image enhancement, targeting scope, low light and infrared.

Skills: +6 combat sense, +6/+9 rifle, +6/+8 awareness, +6 athletics, +4/+7 handgun, +4/+7 submachinegun, +4 martial arts (karate), +4 melee weapons, +3 human perception, +2 streetwise, +2 persuasion, +2 lock pick, +2 social, +2 intimidate, +2 drive, +2 basic tech.

Gear: Flak vest (SP 20), B&E tools, MP5 (silenced) with 120 rounds, Browning Hi-power with 36 rounds.

Griggs has a score to settle with the members of DOA and specifically requested to be assigned to this mission. He was in charge of security at the station where the group made its last raid, and the blame for its success has fallen squarely on him. His position as one of his company's security team leaders has been called into question, and now Griggs is fighting for his job. The team leader is a very ruthless person and has developed a deep hatred for the rockers. He plans to kill each and every one of them before taking the chip back to his bosses.

Corpcops

Corporate Solos. INT 7, TECH 5, REF 8, COOL 6, LUCK 7, ATT 5, EMP 7, MA 6, BOD 8.

Cyberware: 50% chance of a random piece of cyberware.

Skills: +4 combat sense, +6 melee weapon, +5 awareness, +4 athletics, +4 martial arts (random), +4 handgun, +4 rifle, +4 stealth, +3 brawling, +3 drive, +2 streetwise, +2 persuasion, +2 human perception, +2 basic tech, +2 intimidate, +2 social.

Gear: Flak vest (SP 20), low-light goggles, Federated Arms X-9mm with 26 rounds. One man has an AKR-20 assault rifle with 60 rounds.

The corporate security troops are just here to do their jobs so they can go home. They don't really have any feelings one way or the other about the mission or the band, but bonuses get paid for success, so they want to get the chip. The referee should decide how many of these men come up against the characters, based on the PCs' strength. Ω

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Horror of the Centuries

A Call of Cthulhu adventure by J.B. Hill Art by Mark Ryberg

The adventurers recently investigated the mysterious death of Professor Leslie-Smith, an eminent Eqyptologist who committed suicide by slashing his wrists while examining the mummy of a servant of Nephra-Ka, an evil ancient Egyptian priest. In Lesley-Smith's book, Khefu the Black Pharaoh, the PCs read of the power struggle between the evil pharaoh Khefu and his daughter-wife Nitocris and the high priest Nephra-Ka. Khefu and Nitocris overthrew Nephra-Ka and killed him. But before they could destroy his body, it was stolen and hidden deep in the western deserts by the priest's followers. In revenge, Nitocris hunted down these followers of Nephra-Ka and subjected each of them to the ultimate horror of living mummification. They were each exposed, via an enchanted bronze mirror, to the image of the ancient god Ghatamothoa, which resulted in their still-living brain becoming encased in a petrified body. It was the body of one such mummified servant that Leslie-Smith discovered and was examining at the time of his tragic death. For more details of his fate, refer to "Curse of the Centuries" in ***Challenge 65****.*

The investigators are approached by museum authorities concerning the notes of the late Professor Leslie-Smith. Three museum professors sit facing the investigators. Behind stands a man introduced as a representative of the government. He does not speak, and neither does he smile. One of the professors speaks:

"Gentlemen (and ladies). You were of great assistance to the museum at the time of our friend Lesley-Smith's tragic, er, death. As you know, many of his papers, diaries and notes were in his own personal shorthand. We have now



translated these and made an amazing discovery. The good professor had for many years sought the resting place of the priest Nephra-Ka. It is reputed that when his body was taken to the desert by his servants, they took many of his possessions—gold and precious gems—now worth a king's ransom. Also left were papyrus scrolls with ancient knowledge dating back to legendary Mu. Oh, and one other item—the secret of eternal life.

"Lesley-Smith discovered a map and certain other objects and clues, which we believe reveal the tomb of Nephra-Ka. Because the tomb lies not in Egypt but to the west of Libya, the recovery of the secrets of the tomb must be undertaken with as little publicity as possible. We would like you to enter the desert, locate the tomb and recover its secrets, bringing them back to us. We will arrange an escort for part of the way, and they will protect your return. We are assured that the whole expedition will be perfectly safe, and, of course, you will be provided with the best equipment available at our expense.

"You may secure one half of the value of any gold and other treasure recovered. The scrolls will be deposited in the museum. As far as the secret of eternal life—well, it is of course pure fantasy, hardly worth speaking of. But if it should have some, er, beneficial effects in prolonging life, you would share these secrets with us three here and well, let us just say, a certain influential person in the government."

The investigators are then shown a map. From Wadi et Sheikh, they are to proceed west to the Bahamya Oasis, then further to the south of the Qattaru Depression to Sitra and Bahrain to the Siwa Oasis. Here they will leave their escort and travel west into Libya, south of Jaghbut to a location marked on the map as the Lost Oasis of Phorcydes.

"One other matter," the professor adds. "The professor mentions a key of life. This object was found within the servant's body which Leslie-Smith was examining, and it fits the description of the key of life. It seems that this must be carried to the tomb by one of you. Regrettably, we know not why, nor what it opens, but its relevance is obviously of foremost importance."

The investigators are handed a quartz ankh with an udjat-eye engraved in the top. An INT roll will indicate that both are symbols of life.

The referee should note which character carries the key of life.

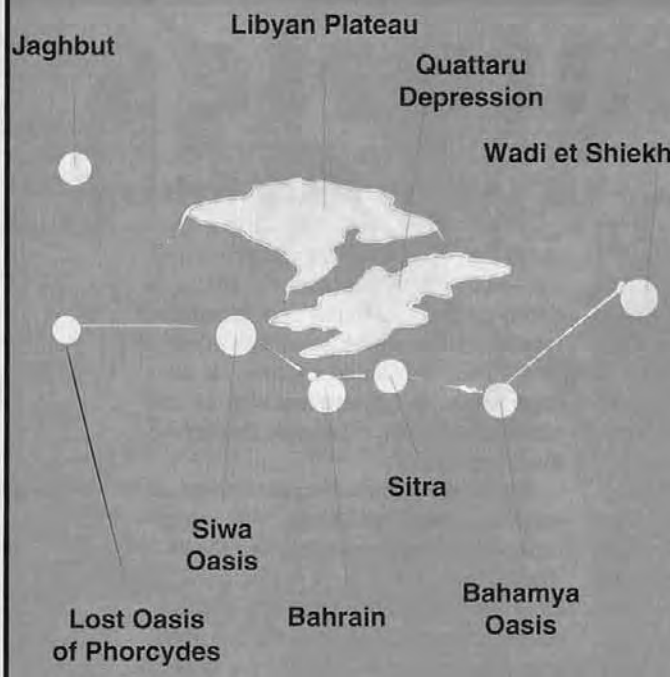
KEEPER'S BACKGROUND

The scenario can be set in the 1880s, 1920s or present times. In each case, a trip into Libya is a dangerous operation, as the investigators will realize.

1880s: The desert is the domain of the Bedouin Arabs, who will protect their home from infidels. Any outsider captured by the Bedouins will be tortured to death in a hideous manner.

1920s: Libya is an Italian colony. In 1922, Mussolini's Fascists came to power. They are now exploring the Libyan desert, seeking the lost city of the Gorgons. If they capture the inves-

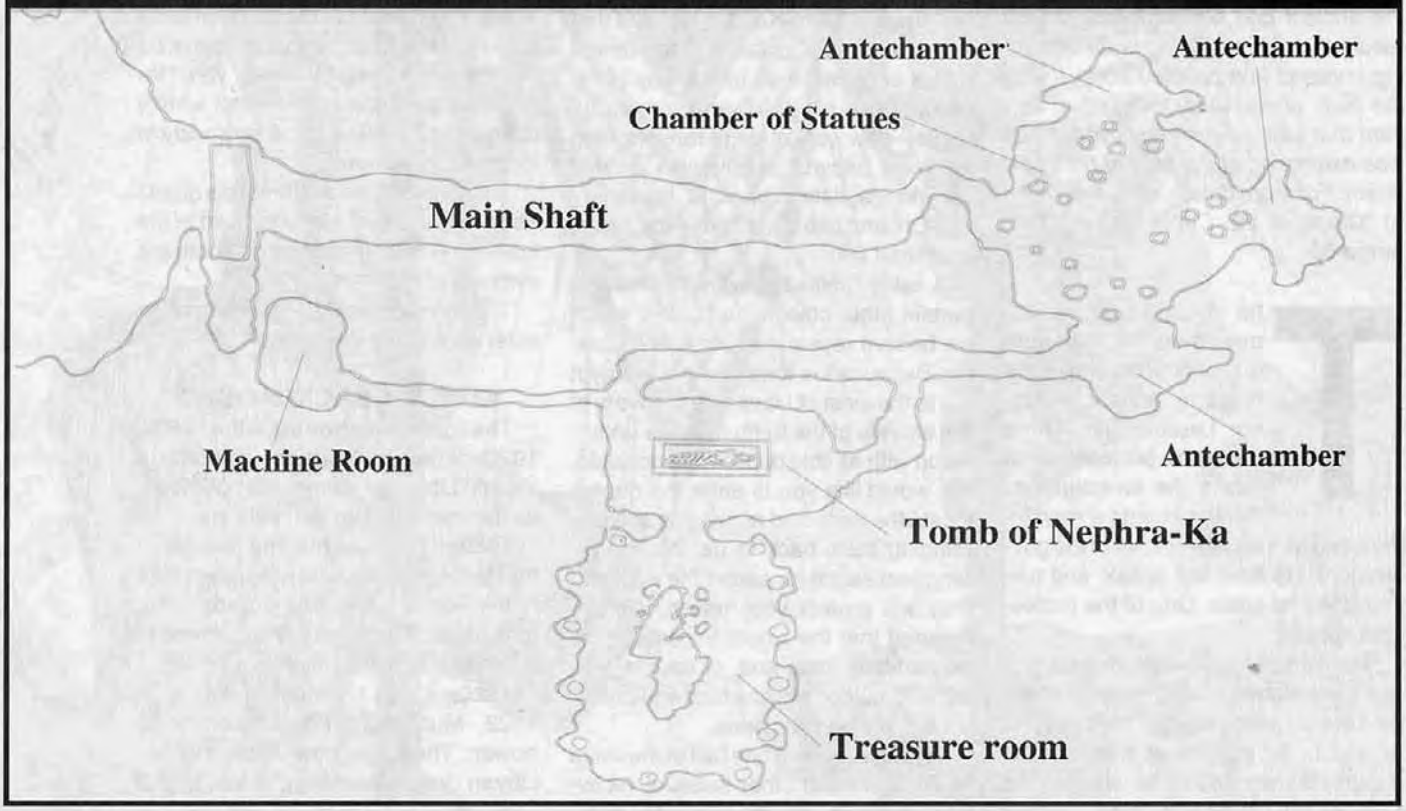
JOURNEY



Lost Oasis of Phorcydes



The Tomb of Nephra-Ka



tigators, they will certainly shoot them or worse. (This adventure can be influenced by the *Indiana Jones* films.)

Present Day: Libya is under the control of the mad ruler Gaddafi. It is used as a training ground for such terrorist groups as the PLO and the IRA. If the investigators are captured by these groups, they will be shot if they are lucky.

JOURNEY

If the investigators research the name "Phoracydes," upon a successful library roll, they will find that it is a name associated with the mythical Gorgons who by legend derived from Libya.

Sitra: The passage through Egyptian territory goes without serious incident. While at Sitra, one investigator, the one in possession of the key of life, will be quietly visited in the night by a tall black man. He will speak perfect English and be expensively dressed, wearing dark glasses even though it is nighttime.

"My friend," he will say, "there are many mysteries in the desert. Rely on the hand of the desert for help, and he will send the Children of Thoth to protect you. Remember, the eye will protect you from evils you can see."

The mysterious stranger will then leave. No trace of him is ever seen by the party.

Siwa: A Siwa, the adventurers meet a drunken Irishman living with the Arabs. He will welcome any visitors, except British, which he hates. In any event, he will mumble about mysterious activity in the desert before becoming unconscious. In the morning he is dead—his throat is cut—and the Arabs are preparing to move on.

LOST OASIS OF PHORCYDES

Eventually, the party will enter Libya and locate the oasis. It is set within a rocky valley and seems very peaceful—there is cool fresh water, shade and swaying palm trees. It is an ideal place to camp.

It will not take the investigators long locate the tomb entrance, which, according to the map, is at the north end of the oasis.

Suddenly, the camp is attacked and surrounded as follows:

1880s: By Bedouin tradesman each armed with a sword and a rifle.

1920s: By fascists armed with machineguns.

Present Day: By terrorist guerrillas armed with AK-47s.

In any case, the PC group is completely surrounded. The leader approaches the group and is obviously hostile. The adventurers should suspect that they have only minutes left to live.

Sacred Baboon of Thoth or Hamadryus Baboon (Cynocephalus hanadryus) (Lesser Independent Race)

An average troop will number over 200 individuals. The males are silver and the females more brown. Although worshiped in Egypt, the Sacred Baboon himself worships the moon.

STR 4D6, CON 3D6, SIZ 2D6 + 3, POW 3D6, DEX 2D6 + 12, INT 2D6.
Move 18, HP 20.
Armor—point of fur.
Claw 60%, 1D6 + 1D6, a baboon has one bite and two claws.
Bite 40%, 1D8 + 1D6, attacks each round.
Climb 80%, Jump 50%, Sneak 80%, Track 40%, Operate Machinery 10%.

Egyptian Cobra-Naja or Aspic (Naja Haje)

STR 2, CON 6, SIZE 2, POW 3, DEX 14.
HP, Move 4 (3 swimming).
Hide 80%, Track 60%, Climb Tree 30%.
Bite 40%—damage, extremely poisonous, neurotoxic.
Venom strength 12—death occurs in minutes.
+Save against CON or suffer 1D4, local tissue destruction.
Save against CON again or gangrene sets in.

Mummified Sand Dweller

DEX 10, Amor 6, Hit point 20, Attack—claw 25%, 1D6 + 1D6.

Then, just as suddenly, the enemies are attacked by baboons. These are fearsome creatures of high intelligence, with great manual dexterity. Although many baboons are killed in the battle, the baboon band savages every enemy, tearing out throats, ripping off heads and creating carnage. Some of the enemies attack the investigators, but the baboons fight to save any party member in danger, especially the person carrying the key of life.

After the savage fight is over, the baboons will depart back into the desert. The investigators should have several injuries to treat before they can enter the tomb.

TOMB OF NEPHRA-KA

The tomb may now be entered. The stone door rolls aside easily.

Main Shaft: This leads steeply down into the rock. It is cool down here. The tunnel is partially blocked by a wall. Engraved upon the wall is a figure of an Egyptian goddess with a snake's head. She appears to be staring at the investigators. A successful Egyptology roll reminds the investigators that the figure is of the Goddess Buto, protector of sacred places. Like most snakes, she had the power to petrify victims with her stare. The Egyptian cobra was sacred to her, and this serpent was also used as a guardian. The figure has one hand raised, as if warning trespassers to proceed no further. The keeper may wish to have an Egyptian cobra at this location. It is pale brown on top, with a yellow belly and the famous hood. It was often used to guard tombs.

Chamber of Statues: Limestone statuses are randomly distributed around this room. All are most lifelike and appear to be warriors from various ages. Some are Greek, some Roman and some Arab, but all have expressions of grave horror on their faces. All are definitely post-Egyptian. If the investigators try to leave after entering this room, the baboons will return and prevent their retreat. The baboons will not hurt the one carrying the key of life, but will activate a mechanism on the outside, closing the store door. It cannot be opened from the inside.

Antechambers: There are three bronze mirrors, one in each room. As the investigators enter, the mirrors shimmer, and an image appears. A priestess of ancient Mu materializes—each mirror is a gateway. The priestesses are extremely beautiful, with exquisite faces and figures. Not even the hissing snakes in the place of hair spoil the beauty of these women. Anyone who see a priestess (except the holder of the key of life) must save against CON. If they fail, then in one round, their joints start to stiffen with what appears to be arthritis, and they lose half of their DEX. If they fail a second roll the next round, then muscles start to calcify and ossify, their skin becomes dry and chalky, and they lose another half of their new lower DEX. If they fail a third roll on the third round, they turn to a chalky limestone-like statue. The holder of the key of life suffer the ill-effects, but if he holds the key up and orders the priestesses to depart, they will obey his command. So beautiful are the priestesses that they charm any human, male or female. A successful POW roll must be made to look

away and a DEX roll each round thereafter to prevent an accidental looking at the priestesses. The priestesses cannot be attacked—they only appear in image in the mirrors. There is no SAN loss to see them, but there is a SAN loss of 1D6÷1D20 to witness the petrification of a friend.

Treasure Room: This is everything the investigators hoped for—full of gold, diamonds, emeralds and pearls. Unfortunately, it is guarded by mummified sand dwellers. If anyone attempts to move any treasure, a sand dweller mummy activates and prevents the removal. Sand dwellers are even more hideous than human mummies, similar to wooden statues with hard black claws. Seeing one still has a SAN loss of 0/1D6. To see one activated has a SAN loss of 1D4÷1D10. They will not attack the person with the key of life.

Machine Room: A lever opens the stone door if it is closed.

Tomb of Nephra-Ka: The tomb is plain stone with a stone sarcophagus in the center. The wooden lid is in perfect condition and is easily removed. Nephra-Ka is a typical human mummy—swathed in bandages. He holds in his hands a scroll parchment. If anyone removes and examines the parchment, the viewer will have to save against POW or be paralyzed as many rounds as he has magic points. He loses 1 magic pound a round until all are gone, and he then falls to the ground unconscious. The spell is a visual pattern. It needs to be viewed, not read.

Nephra-Ka was not killed by Khefu (as Khefu realized, hence the search to destroy the body). The priest was mummified alive, voluntarily viewing his god Ghatanothoa. His brain is still alive and functioning. He is as sane as he ever was—that is, he is mad, but not totally insane. He has one remaining spell, a mind transfer, which he can cast on the person carrying the key of life. It is the key to Nephra-Ka's life He also has an unnaturally high POW. The person carrying the key will apparently suffer a seizure. The PCs have as many rounds as the victim has magic points to solve the problem, or Nephra-Ka will transfer to the victim's body. After a successful transfer, Nephra-Ka (with the keeper now running that character) will claim to have lost his memory. He will agree to return to civilized society, but will try to kill each of the other investigators in turn. The victim of the spell will indeed have discovered the secret of eternal life—he is now trapped within the living brain of the ancient mummy forever.

RETURN

Upon their return, the PCs will be interviewed by the representative of the government, who will cross-examine them in detail—especially about the desert activities of other governments or organizations. He will advise them in the strongest way not to discuss what they have seen with anyone.

Afterwards, characters will realize that they are being followed, that their mail is being opened and that their telephone is tapped. If they act foolishly, a large black saloon will sideswipe their car off a remote road. If they continue to act foolishly, another large black saloon will overtake them and open fire with at least three submachine guns of government-issue caliber.

UNREWARDS

If the mind transfer is completed, the victim becomes an NPC with a great knowledge of the fourth dynasty of ancient Egypt, but has a complete lack of understanding for anything modern. His fellows lose 106 SAN for the loss of their friend.

If they realize what has happened, they lose 1D10 to realize that Nephra-Ka inhabits his body and 1D12 if they kill their friend's body.

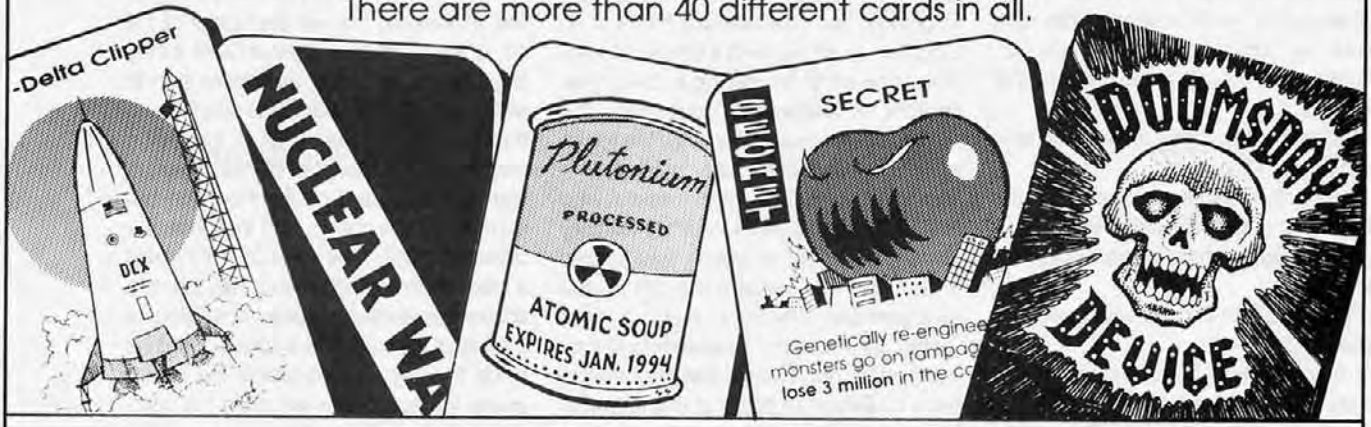
If they realize that their friend's mind is trapped in the mummy, they lose 1D20 whether they destroy the mummy or let their friend continue to suffer. Ω

This scenario follows from "Curse of the Centuries," which was published in ***Challenge 65****. And don't miss "Evil of the Centuries," also by J. B. Hill, in* ***Challenge 76****.*

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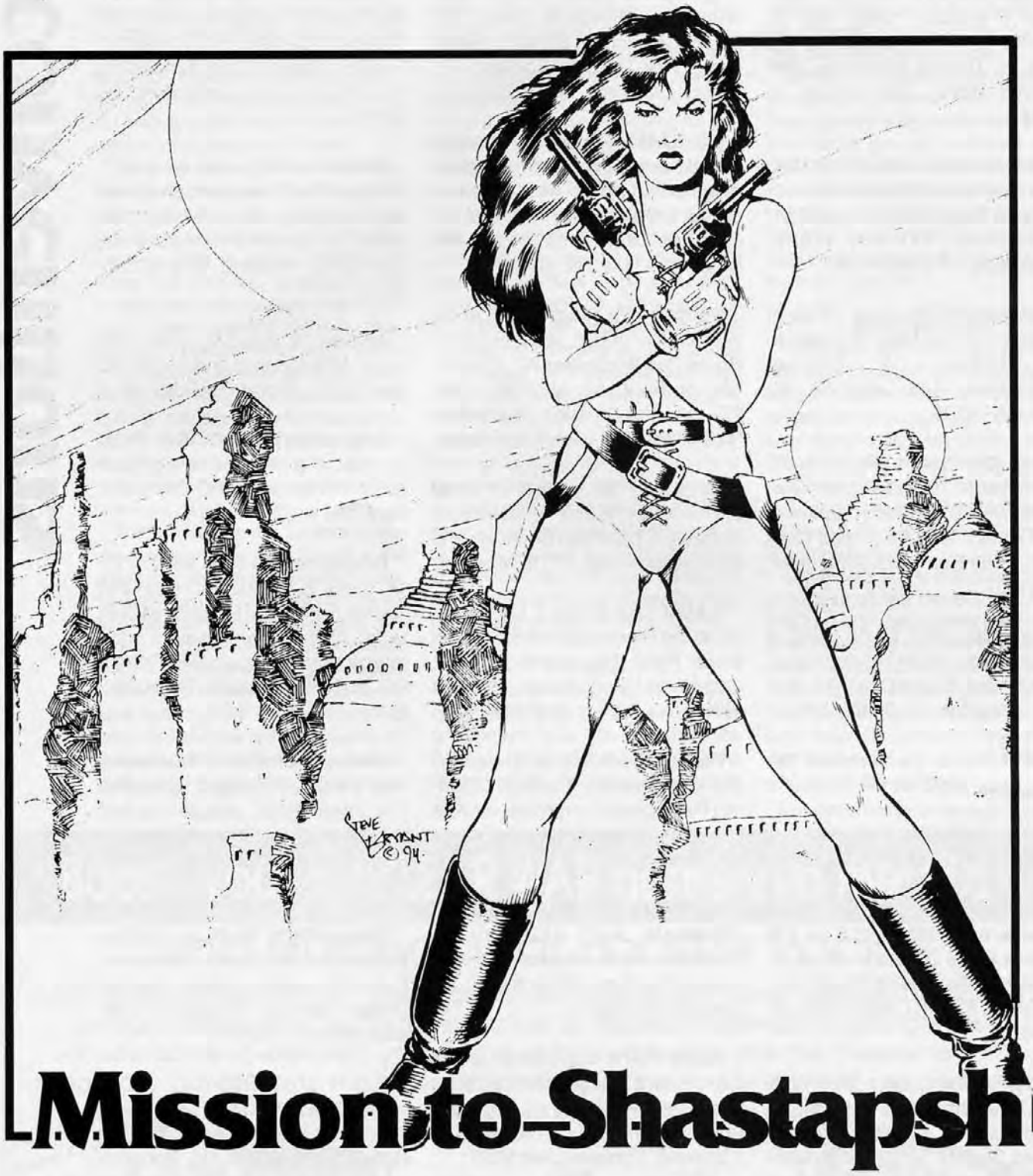
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Mission to Shastapsh

A Space: 1889 adventure by James L. Cambias Art by Steve Bryant

When our operation in Thoth went bust, Mulvihill and I had to skip town in a hurry, one jump ahead of the prince's guards. We took passage on a merchant kite bound for Syrtis and breathed easier when Thoth was out of sight.

On the second day out, we were crossing the Isidis Desert when a ship came hustling after us out of the south. At first, she looked like an ordinary gun kite, but when our captain crowded on canvas to outrun her, the mystery ship began puffing smoke like a steamer.

"Shastapsh privateers, I reckon," I said to Mulvihill. "What can you make out through the telescope?"

"It can't be!" he whispered, peering hard through the glass. "Tom, either my eyes have gone bad, or else that privateer is flying the flag of the Newport Yacht Club!"

Then the shooting started.

The revolt against British rule in the city of Shastapsh has created some unique headaches for Percival Lowell, the American consul in Syrtis Major. Officially, the United States does not recognize the independence of Shastapsh—as far as Washington is concerned, the revolt is a purely internal affair of the

British colonial government.

But unofficially, there is a great deal of support for the Shastapsh rebels in America. The rebel government is the closest thing to a democracy on Mars, which appeals to many in the United States. The exploits of the Fenian Battalion in the fight against Britain are tremendously popular among Irish-Americans. Similarly, many German-Americans take pride in the activities of the German Tripod squadron fighting for Shastapsh. Consul Lowell must carefully balance American sympathy for Shastapsh against the fact that American interests on Mars are inextricably linked to Britain's interests. Usually, Lowell is up to the job, but now a crisis has developed.

An American privateer named Nathan Derby Pickman has recently started operating out of Shastapsh. His ship is fast and well-armed, and Pickman has rapidly built up an impressive list of British ships captured or destroyed. He frequently flies the American flag while privateering, which has led to stiff complaints from the British government. What complicates matters is that young Pickman is from one of the oldest and wealthiest families in Massachusetts. If he is shot down or executed by the British, it would create a serious breach between America and England. But if he continues privateering, the British may take it as an act of war.

SECRET COMMISSION

If one or more of the player characters are Americans, they will be contacted by Percival Lowell and asked to meet with him privately. At his house, Lowell treats the PCs to a splendid dinner prepared by his Martian chef, then explains the situation.

Lowell would like the characters to undertake a small commission for him. He has a letter from Nathan's father, Obed Marsh Pickman. The letter is a firm request that young Nathan stop his privateering or else be disinherited. Lowell would like the adventurers to deliver the letter to Shastapsh and try to persuade Nathan to stop attacking British vessels. Lowell and the elder Pickman can offer the party £100 per person if Nathan leaves Shastapsh for good.

British Version: British player characters will be summoned by Charles Merrivale, head of the colony's Cartographic Office. The Cartographic Office is actually a front organization for the British Secret Service, and Merrivale is Britain's spymaster in Syrtis Major. He has a very different commission for the party: Merrivale would like the PCs to slip into Shastapsh and capture young Pickman, then bring him back to Syrtis Major for trial. Merrivale will give the PCs £500 to cover expenses; they can keep what they do not spend.

Mixed Version: If the player characters in your campaign are a mix of British and American adventurers, try to make sure that neither group of players hears what the other characters' mission is. Let the players themselves decide how much to tell one another. In the 1890s, Britain and America are still wary of each other and often work at cross-purposes.

GETTING TO SHASTAPSH

Since the British are currently fighting a war along their border with Shastapsh, it is obvious that the party cannot travel that way. To reach Shastapsh, the characters must go via Thoth or Karkarham. Both routes have their unique dangers.

From Thoth: The adventurers can get to Thoth aboard a cloudship from Mylarkt. The skies over the Isidis Desert and the Nepenthes-Thoth steppe are infested both with British gunboats and Shastapsh privateers. Roll encounters normally, treating large warship encounters as British gunboats, small warships as privateers, and pirates as High Martian brigands.

At Thoth, the party can get passage aboard a canal barge to Shastapsh. On a roll of 1 on 1D6, the barge will be attacked by a marauding British gunboat. All fares and shipping rates are doubled on the run into Shastapsh.

From Karkarham: Reaching Karkarham is itself an adventure, what with High Martian pirates and Oenotrian raiders in the Shistomik Mountains, in addition to the many pirates who operate out of Karkarham itself. Roll encounters normally using the table in the basic rulebook, but replace all the animal encounters (Great Kommota, Eelowaan, etc.) with either Karkarham pirates or Oenotrian warships.

Once at Karkarham, the party will have to get cloudship transport to Shastapsh. The fares are doubled on that run, and the PCs will have to wait 2D6 days to find a ship, unless they can charter a vessel or purchase one.

Other Means: If the player characters have their own ship, they can get to Shastapsh however they choose. The referee should adjust their encounters according to the guidelines above.

Once within Shastapsh territory, ships will be intercepted by vessels of the Shastapsh Navy. The naval officers will search all incoming ships carefully, and they will check the identity papers and credentials of all Terran visitors. British subjects who identify themselves as such will be arrested and taken off to be interned.

SHASTAPSH DESCRIBED

The population of Shastapsh is 60,000, and the city controls some surrounding towns with a combined population of perhaps 24,000. The city's economy is based on mining and metalworking, supplemented by shipbuilding and the canal trade. Before the war, it was quite prosperous. The language of Shastapsh is Parhooni, but Cebreni and Hespesian are frequently understood.

The city is built on an island in the center of the canal. Referees who own **Sky Galleons of Mars** can consult the city map provided with that game. The suburbs sprawl out onto the banks of the canal. Shastapsh has many ancient towers and buildings of great beauty. Some signs of damage from the revolt are still visible, as are scars from when the cruiser *Triumph* shelled the city in 1887.

The city has no walls, relying instead on the canal for protection. Since the outbreak of war, the army has set up gun emplacements and earthworks around the city's perimeter. These are quite modern in design, as the army is being advised by an Irish-American engineer who fought at Vicksburg and Shiloh. (The British would be very interested in sketches of the fortifications.)

REBEL CITY

When the British subjugated Shastapsh in 1887, the ruling Prince Gemoortav agreed to abdicate in exchange for a handsome subsidy. Many in Shastapsh were outraged that the ruler they had fought to protect had sold them out. Resentment in the city festered, and the incompetent city governor, Jeremy Strutt, only made things worse by alternating weakness and brutality.

At the outbreak of the Oenotrian War, the British withdrew some of their forces from Shastapsh, leaving only a small contingent of Meepsoori and Moeris Lacus troops to occupy the city. When a mocking crowd burned an effigy of Governor Strutt during the drunken celebration of the Swift Moon Festival, he panicked and ordered the city watch to break up the festival. The Martian watch

officers refused, and Strutt called in the soldiers. Someone fired a shot, and the city exploded.

The garrison troops were overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of the mob. A quick-thinking captain was able to organize an orderly retreat, but casualties were high. Governor Strutt was found by the rebels as he tried to escape in disguise; they hacked him to pieces.

Governing Council: Some prominent citizens—mostly merchants and bureaucrats—formed the Shastapsh Governing Council and organized an army to defend the city. Surprisingly, one of the council's first actions was to hold citywide elections. Most council members were easily returned to office, but the vote has made the council the only democratically elected government on Mars.

Currently, there are 15 men on the council. The most powerful are Laareb Mitaav, Agodak Juduuz and Vashtaan Eelogeem. Mitaav commands the army; Juduuz is head of the Justice Tribunal and controls the police; and Eelogeem is a popular leader of the masses. The council members constantly struggle for power, even as they try to preserve their city's freedom.

Army: The army of Shastapsh is described in the **Soldier's Companion**. It is organized into 10 "flags" of about 200 men each. Each flag elects its officers. Most of the troops are volunteers, but three of the flags have veterans of the old city militia. Each flag has two infantry bands, one of cavalry, and a gun section. Half the men have muskets or bows; the rest carry melee weapons.

Navy: Shastapsh has a small nav, and is struggling desperately to find more ships. There are two *Endtime*-class screw galleys with Trained crews, supplemented by a half-dozen armed merchant kites with Green crews. The city's shipyard and foundries make it possible to repair cloudships, and the navy is building two large armored screw galleys. The council has issued dozens of seizure warrants, so the skies around Shastapsh are full of privateers. While the privateers can raid commerce and keep British gunboats busy on patrol, they would probably vanish if a fleet ever came to attack the city.

CONDITIONS IN SHASTAPSH

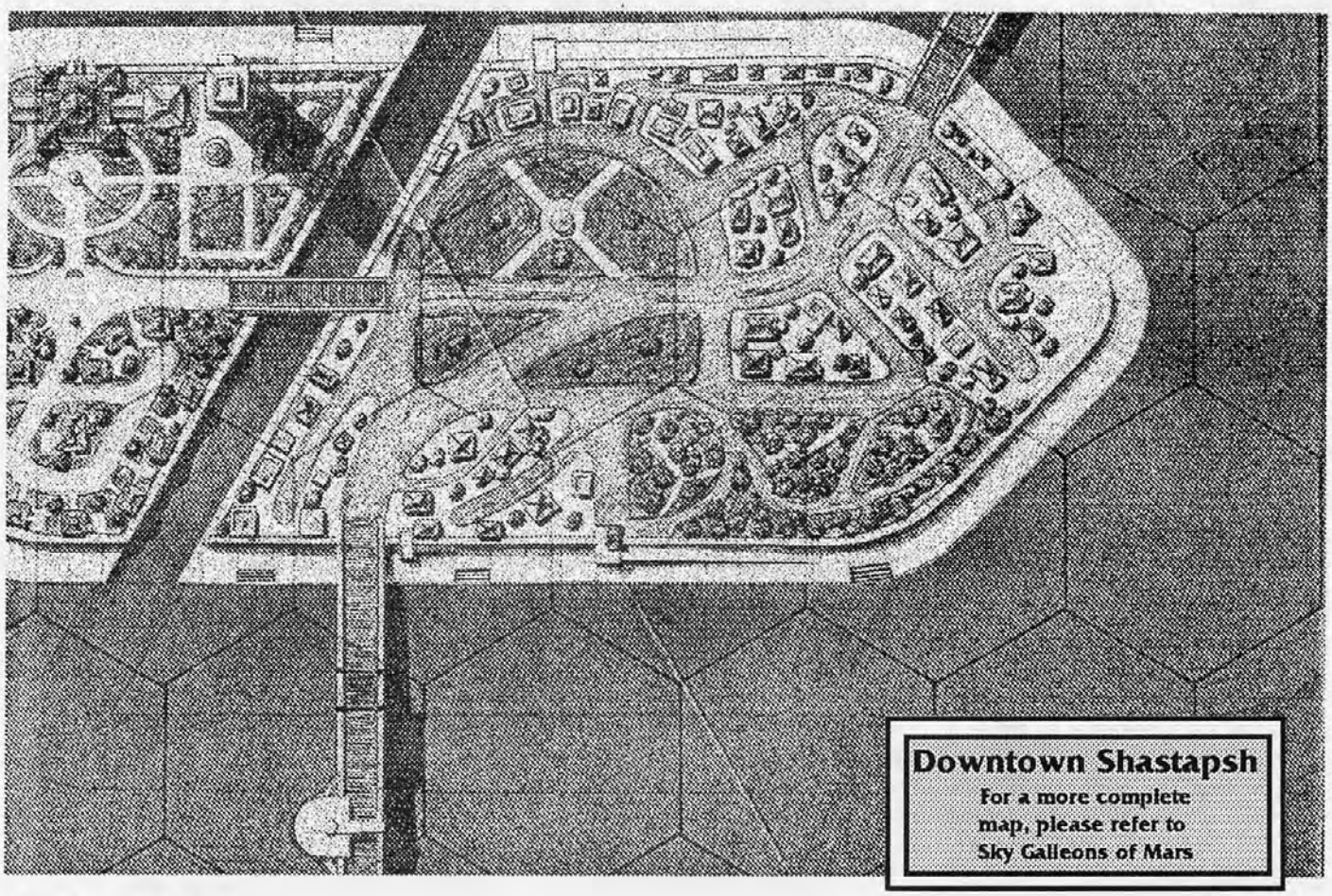
The war has placed an incredible strain on Shastapsh's resources, but so far the city has met the challenge. Unemployment has vanished, since all idle citizens are either in the army or working in the shipyards and arsenals. Food supplies are tight, but the council's rationing program seems to be working. The government has almost no money and is printing paper currency to keep things going. So far, the citizens accept the paper money. It is rumored that Shastapsh is receiving gold from other cities.

Prices are very high in Shastapsh, and many items are completely unavailable. Referees should double the cost of most items. Terran goods cost 10 times normal, when they can be had at all. Guns and ammunition are almost impossible to find.

Visitors will notice the unusual public-spiritedness and determination of the people of Shastapsh. Corruption is entirely missing from the Shastapsh government. Even the merchants do not haggle as much as they might. Crime is low, and the Justice Tribunal is unrelenting in its pursuit of wrongdoers. The red, black and green tricolor flag of Shastapsh is everywhere.

ENCOUNTERS IN SHASTAPSH

Terran adventurers wandering around Shastapsh will automatically attract attention. Every hour, roll 1D6 for an encounter. During the day, there will be an encounter on a roll of 1-3; at night, a roll of 1 is required. Check the



Downtown Shastapsh
For a more complete map, please refer to Sky Galleons of Mars

tables below for the nature of the encounter.

Roll	Day	Night
1	Police	Police
2	Police	Terrans
3	Terran	Refugees
4	Merchant	Criminals
5	Refugees	Ground Cleanser cultists
6	Crowd	Ground Cleanser cultists

Police: The party will meet with 1D6 agents of the Justice Tribunal, who will inspect the player characters' identification and ask them their business. If the PCs are acting at all suspicious, the police will take them in for questioning by Agodak Juduuz. Police are Green NPCs armed with swords.

Terrans: The PCs encounter one or more of the other Terrans in Shastapsh. Most will be interested in who the player characters are and why they are in the city.

Merchant: The adventurers meet a merchant, who will try to sell them something. The nature of the goods for sale is up to the referee, but everything will be expensive.

Refugees: The characters meet 3D6 refugees, camping out in the street and begging for food. These are poor farmers from a village in the war zone; they have come to Shastapsh because they have no place else to go.

Crowd: The adventurers come across a large crowd of citizens, in a frenzy of patriotic enthusiasm. Again roll 1D6. On 1-3, they will hail the PCs as some of the city's noble allies. On 4-6, they will chase after them, intending to lynch the evil Red Men. Most in a crowd will be unarmed, but some may have knives.

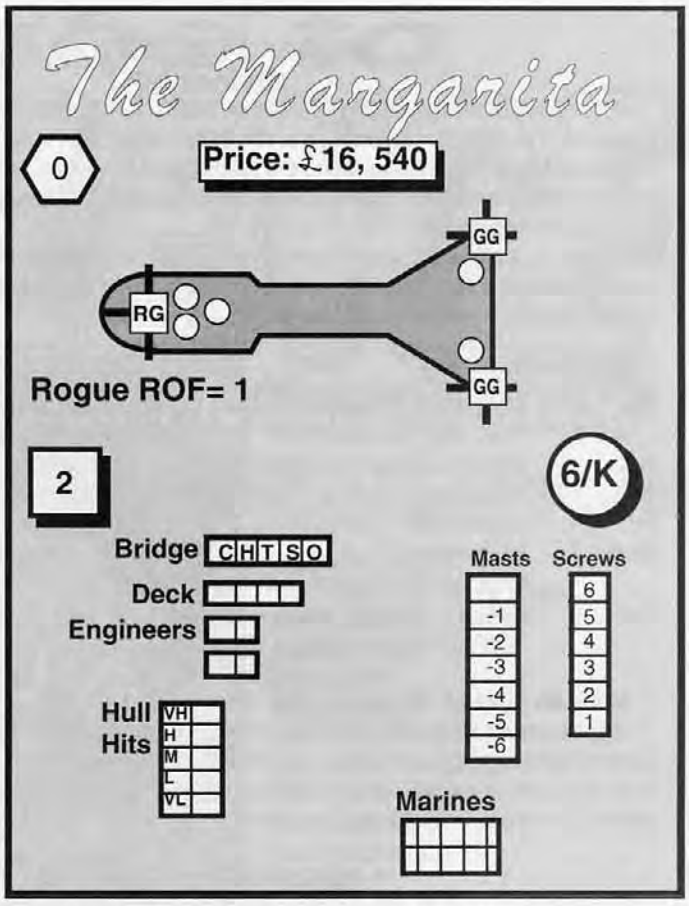
Criminals: The PCs encounter 1D6 criminals in a dark street. Lone crooks may be pickpockets or con men; larger groups will be thugs. Criminals are Veteran NPCs armed with knives and clubs.

Ground Cleansers: The party encounters a group of Ground Cleanser cultists equal in number to the PCs. They have knives and clubs, and will attack the Terrans on sight. They are Trained NPCs.

FOREIGNERS IN SHASTAPSH

Popular attitudes toward Terrans are mixed. Large numbers of Ground Cleanser cultists in Shastapsh live for the day when all Earthmen leave Mars. But the help given by the Fenians, Germans and other human volunteers has made some Terrans very popular in Shastapsh. The Irish, Germans and French are best regarded. Needless to say, the English are thoroughly hated.

At present, there are perhaps 200 Terrans resident in Shastapsh. The Fenian Volunteers have a single battalion of 70 men, with a dozen followers and noncombatants. The German Tripod squadron has 10 men. Five Terran privateering ships operate out of Shastapsh, with a total complement of 80 men. There are another two dozen civilian Earthmen in Shastapsh—arms dealers, reporters, spies, anarchists and similar shady characters. Most have American, Greek or Latin American passports. The Germans and Fenians are usually at the front, and the privateers are often out on cruises, so at any given time there are only about 100 Earthmen in the city.



Foreigners in Shastapsh tend to cluster in the port district, near the landing-field. A bar called the Liberty Tavern is their unofficial headquarters. The place is dark and smoky—a natural haven for intrigue. There are always plots and mysterious deals being hatched around the tables in the back. The owner is a one-eyed old Martian woman called "Granny Akvaan," who wears a British officer's tunic (a bullet hole is visible just over the heart).

FINDING PICKMAN

Nathan is actually fairly easy to locate, but he is hard to see. He spends much of his time aboard his privateering ship, the *Margarita,* out on patrol. When in port, he lives in one of the city's ancient towers, guarded by his marines. The marines do not admit visitors without Nathan's approval.

If any of the player characters are Americans of Social Level 6, there is a very good chance that they are personally acquainted with Nathan. He will almost certainly have heard of the PC's family. Such social connections might get the characters in to see him.

Nathan is always interested in better weapons for his ship. Characters who are (or claim to be) arms merchants will be allowed in. He is also something of a scientific dilettante, and would love to talk with any scholars visiting Shastapsh—especially archaeologists.

MISS CONSIDINE

Nathan is always accompanied by a lovely dark-haired woman named Margarita Considine. She is an extremely intelligent woman with a strong personality and remarkable beauty. Among her many talents is a gift for new inventions.

Anyone meeting Nathan and Margarita will quickly realize that she is the real brains of the pair. Margarita harbors a deep hatred for the British and is waging war on them, with Nathan as her weapon. She is fully aware of the diplomatic complications he is generating, and she hopes to cause war between England and America.

There are two ways to play Margarita. Either she and Nathan are in love, and he has taken up the fight against Britain on her behalf, or else she is merely using him. In the latter case, she may be employing her Mind Control drug to keep him in line.

MARGARITA

Nathan's ship is a much-modified old *Small Bird*-class screw galley. The turncranks have been replaced with a forced-draught steam engine designed by Margarita. The ship also has a com-

NATHAN DERBY PICKMAN
(Trained NPC)

Born to one of the oldest and richest families in New England, young Nathan has always dreamed of living a life of adventure. When he turned 21, Nathan left Harvard and bought a ticket to Mars. He drifted around the planet for a few months, before meeting Margarita Considine in Karkarham. She convinced him to become a privateer and fight for the cause of liberty in Shastapsh.

Nathan is a pleasant young man, utterly devoted to Margarita. He is having great fun living the life of a dashing privateer and sees no reason to give it up. He is something of an idealist and supports the underdog in any conflict.

Attribute		*Skills*
Str:	4	Fisticuffs 3, Throwing 2, Close Combat 2 (edged), Trimsman 1 (steam flyer)
Agl:	2	Stealth 1, Marksmanship 2 (rifle)
End:	5	Wilderness Travel 5 (mapping), Swimming 1
Int:	1	Observation 1, Gunnery 2 (MLC), Science 1 (archaeology)
Chr:	3	Eloquence 2, Linguistics 3 (French, Koline, Parhooni)
Soc:	6	Riding 5 (horse), Leadership 2, Piloting 4 (steam flyer)

Motives: Love (of Margarita), Fair, Adventuresome.

Appearance: Nathan is of medium height and a sturdy build. He has dark hair and is already starting to go bald. His good looks are marred slightly by protruding eyes and a receding chin. His clothing is of the best quality, made in London. Nathan has taken to wearing a sword when travelling in Shastapsh.

MARGARITA CONSIDINE
(Veteran NPC)

Margarita Considine was born of an Irish father and Mexican mother. When she was only a girl, her father was executed by the British for revolutionary activities. Since then, she has harbored a deep hatred of the British specifically and all oppressors in general.

As a strong-willed and talented woman in Victorian society, Margarita has learned to manipulate men to accomplish things she cannot do alone. Her beauty and charm make this simple for her.

Even as a girl, Margarita was interested in science, and has given herself as good an education as any college graduate. She is particularly interested in flight, and has written a paper on the biology of liftwood. She has a natural talent with machinery, and she has a number of inventions to her credit. Sadly, most of them have been turned to the cause of destruction.

Attribute		*Skills*
Str:	2	Fisticuffs 1, Throwing 1, Close Combat 3 (edged)
Agl:	3	Stealth 2, Marksmanship 3 (pistol), Crime 1 (pick locks), Mechanics 2 (machinist)
End:	1	
Int:	6	Observation 5, Science 4 (physics), Engineering 2 (naval architecture)
Chr:	5	Eloquence 5, Linguistics 4 (English, Koline, Parhooni, Hespesian), Theatrics 2
Soc:	4	Riding 3 (horse), Leadership 1

Research Areas: Biochemistry 28, Flight 14, Precision Machinery 10, Metallurgy 5, Combustion 4, Power Production 4, and Electricity 1.

Inventions: Mind Control drug, reliability 3; Personal Conveyor, reliability 6; Quick-Firing Gun, reliability 5; Forced-Draught Boiler, reliability 6.

Motives: Hatred (of the British specifically and oppressors in general), Knowledge, Ambitious.

Appearance: Margarita is devastatingly beautiful. She is tall and slender, with fair skin and large dark eyes. Her hair is dark brown with reddish tints, worn in long braids, Mexican-style. She usually dresses simply and on shipboard sometimes wears trousers. In Shastapsh, she wears a pistol in a holster at her waist and keeps a knife hidden in her stocking.

plete kite rig, for fuel economy on long cruises.

It is armed with a Rogue cannon, modified by Margarita to have a rate of fire of 1. The two Sweeper mounts have been replaced with 1" Gatlings. The *Margarita* carries eight marines (five are Irish or Mexican, and the rest are Martians). It has two passenger cabins and a small laboratory. The cargo hold can fit 20 tons.

The ship can reach Very High altitude. Its speed is 6 under power, or else normal kite speed. The coal bunker is 20 tons, giving the *Margarita* 10 days' endurance under steam. Under sail, she can cruise almost indefinitely. The crew are Trained quality, and the marines are armed with modern Winchester rifles.

OUTCOMES

The player characters will have their work cut out for them getting Nathan to stop privateering. Nathan will not leave Margarita, not even if he gets his father's letter threatening to disinherit him. The characters must find a way to break her hold on him.

If Margarita is using the Mind Control drug on Nathan, the player characters may be able to discover it by observing his behavior. They can then try to release him from its effects. He will not be pleased to learn he has been drugged.

But if Nathan actually is in love with Margarita, things will be much more difficult. The adventurers must find a way to discredit her in Nathan's eyes. It might be simpler to kidnap Nathan and spirit him out of Shastapsh after all.

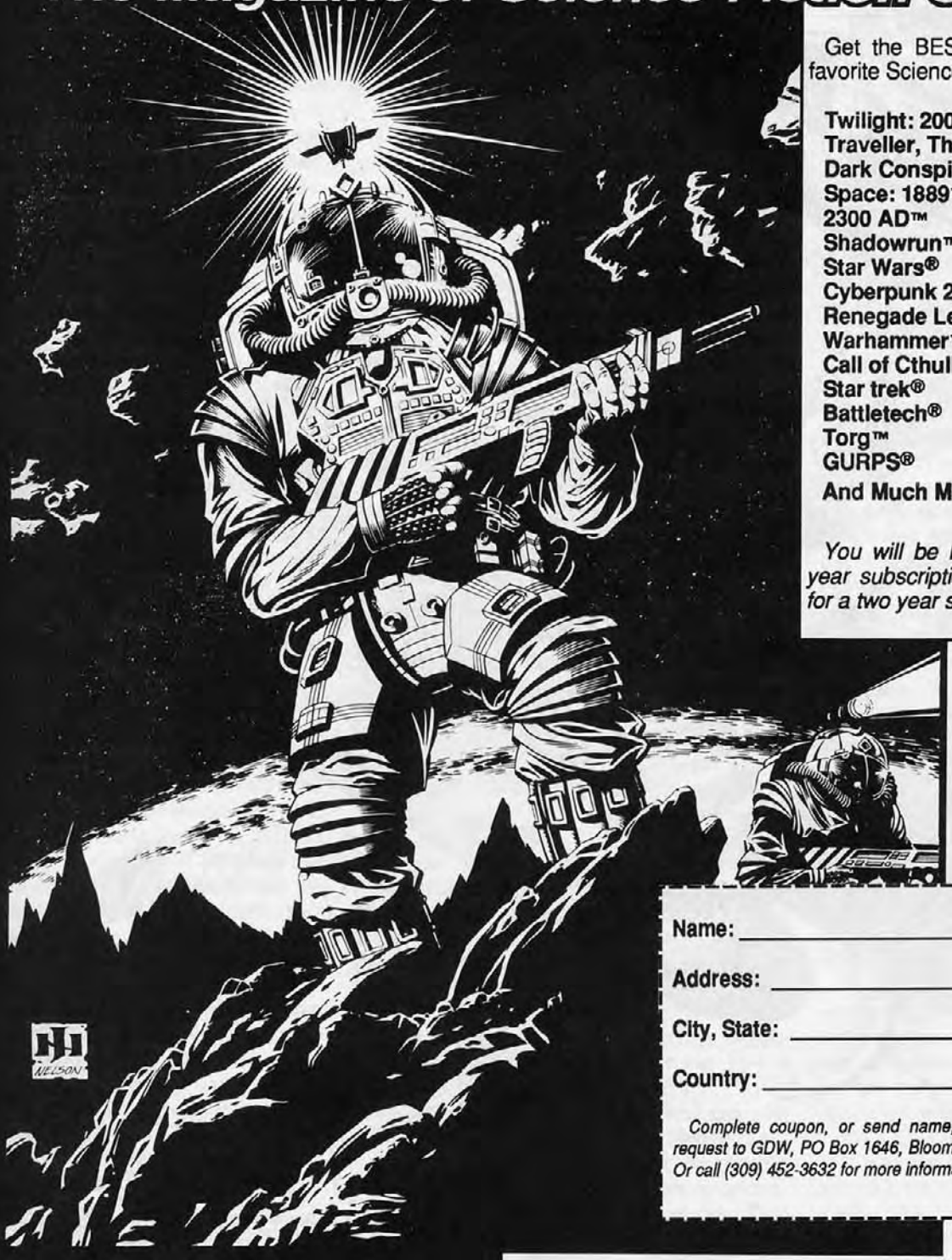
If the PCs do decide on direct action against Nathan, they must evade not only his marine guards but the city's police as well. Nathan is quite popular with the citizens, so anyone harming him will have to face the entire city.

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN SHASTAPSH

There are many other potential adventures for player characters in Shastapsh. The British government may ask them to learn which Martian states are sending money and weapons to the city. The Germans or the French might be covertly supporting the rebellion as well. Perhaps the PCs might be asked to infiltrate the Fenian Volunteers or sabotage the Tripod Squadron. Idealistic characters may decide to join the rebellion. More mercenary sorts could find any number of ways to turn a profit on the situation. Ω

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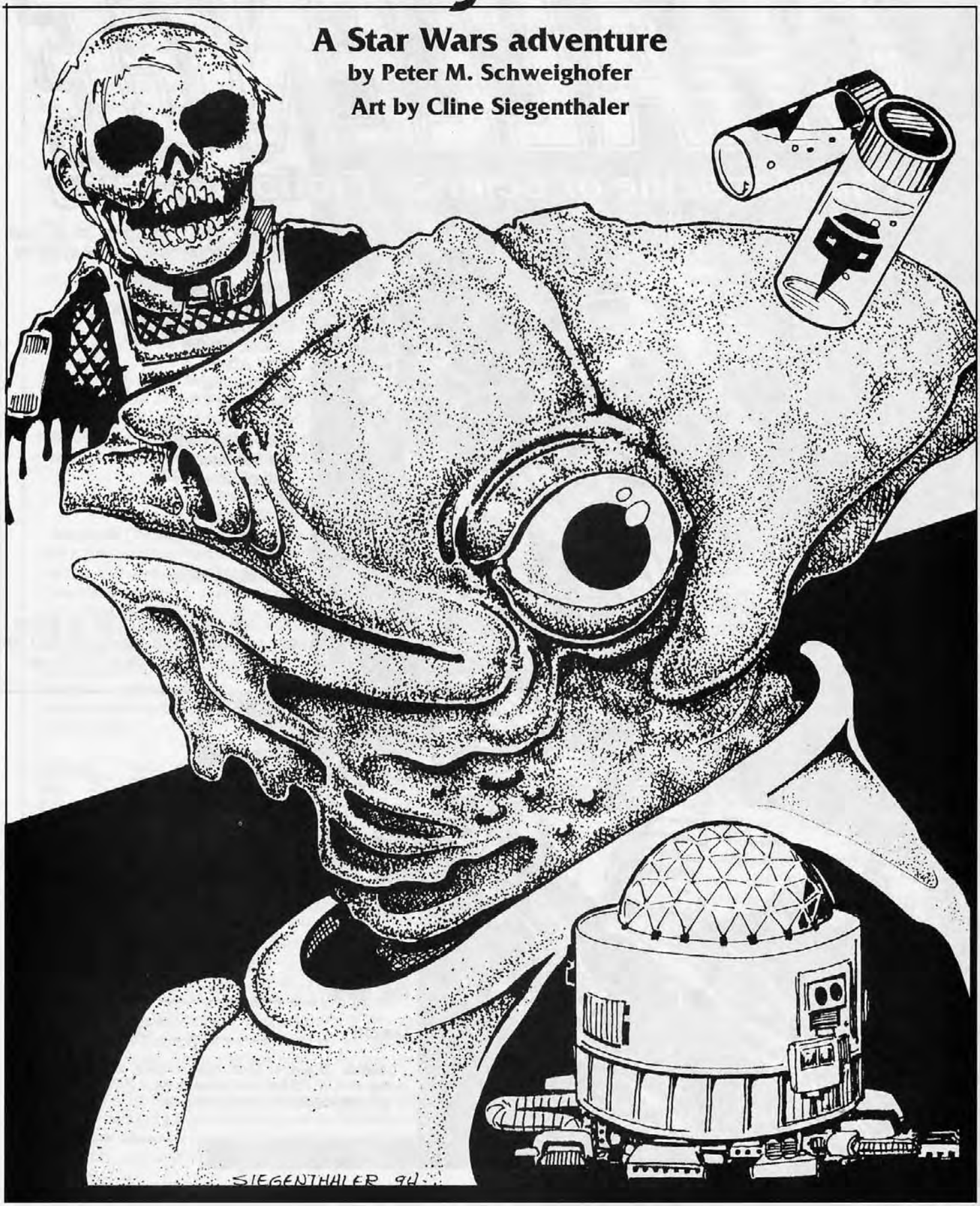
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Death by Triflexia

A Star Wars adventure

by Peter M. Schweighofer

Art by Cline Siegenthaler



This Star Wars adventure takes place in Reginard Base, a Rebel starfighter outpost on a small island in the sea of the uninhabited planet Reginard. The characters recently joined the Rebellion and are stationed here as a transport crew; they use a stock light freighter (their own or the Rebellion's) to ferry supplies and personnel to and from other Rebel installations in the sector.

The characters have been assigned double-bunk cabins in the base, and they have been spending the past few days repairing their freighter. Their supervisor at the base is the commander, General Halomar Corros.

The PCs are returning to their quarters from the hangar late one evening after a long day of repairing their ship when they hear gasping sounds coming from one of the storage bays. A few seconds later, they hear a crash and the crackling of electricity. Then the base power winks out, soon replaced by dim, red emergency lights.

If characters investigate the sounds, they find a large piece of equipment in the storage bay; characters rolling Technology higher than 9 recognize the machine as a sort of sensor array. Smoke drifts from several open service panels on the sensor, and blue electricity is sparking around the cable hooked into the bay's power coupling socket. Slumped next to this machine is a human male in a gray technician's uniform. His face and neck are swollen beyond all proportion and colored a deep red. He is dead.

It appears that the technician fell onto the sensor array after being stricken with some sort of disease. Anyone rolling Technology greater than 9 can tell the fall could have caused the base's power to overload if the technician were working on the equipment.

Soon after the emergency power comes up, General Corros arrives with a woman in an army officer's uniform—the base's second-in-command, Major Tanya Madera. Captain Tony Franco, commander of the station's X-Wing Fighter squadron, arrives a moment later with a technician, Junior Tech Kim Yeasson.

When Doctor Akimbo, the base's Mon Calamari chief medical officer arrives, he orders everyone away from the body. The doctor summons a detox team, which carefully seals the body and brings it to the sick bay laboratory for examination.

Dr. Akimbo asks if anyone touched the body; characters who admit to touching it during their investigation are immediately quarantined in the sick bay.

Once the area is cleared, the detox team seals off the room and begins an air decontamination of the room. Dr. Akimbo approaches General Corros and tells him the dead man is the base's chief technician, Adonar Dellox. When Junior Tech Yeasson hears this news, she begins to cry and runs to her cabin.

"Yeasson and Dellox had a relationship that ended about a month ago," Captain Franco explains. "She looks pretty upset."

General Corros takes this moment to introduce the remaining base commanding officers (see below).

After the medical detox team leaves, Dr. Akimbo promises to inform General Corros of the autopsy results as soon as the cause of death is diagnosed. The other officers leave the PCs with General Corros.

The general explains the machine Dellox was working on. "Our omnidirectional scanning sensors here in Reginard Base only scan half the planet passively for activity, and only cover half of the Reginard System. The planet blocks us from passively scanning the other hemisphere. We don't use active sensors because those could give our position away." The general points to the machine in the storage bay. "This passive sensor array was to be placed on a large continent on the other side of the planet, to monitor surface and system traffic and relay data to our tracking systems here," he says. "But now it looks like its completion will be delayed indefinitely."

QUARANTINE!

Several hours after the characters discover Dellox's death, General Corros orders all personnel to report to the base lounge for testing, apparently a result of the strange death earlier. In the lounge, Dr. Akimbo and members of the medical staff are running blood tests for infectious triflexia, a fatal, contagious disease. All characters must report for examination. Any who avoid the exam are automatically quarantined in the medical suite with the others who might be susceptible to the disease.

Characters must roll their Stamina dice greater than 9 in order to pass the blood tests. PCs rolling less than 10 show possible symptoms of the disease and are ordered into sick bay beds to be quarantined and monitored for 20 hours. Characters who make the roll may spend time fixing the passive sensor array or searching cabins for possible murder clues if they suspect foul play in Dellox's death.

Characters confined to the medical bay with several other base personnel notice nothing out of the ordinary, only Dr. Akimbo keeping his watchful Mon Calamari eyes on possible triflexia symptoms. However, during the day, Major Madera stops by to visit. She is especially cheerful around quarantined characters and some technicians. Madera also visits with one of Captain Franco's X-Wing pilots. A few minutes later, when Franco enters the medical suite to visit, this same pilot begins to convulse, his skin turning deep red and bloating until he drops back to the bed, silent and dead.

If characters ask Dr. Akimbo about triflexia, he takes them aside and explains what he knows. "Triflexia attacks the blood vessels, causing their walls to inflate their cells three times the normal size," Dr. Akimbo says. "Besides increasing blood pressure, it cuts off oxygen exchange in the lungs, throttles the esophagus and crushes brain tissue in the skull. Rebel scientists in the fleet are still searching for a cure, and we know little about how it is transmitted or where it comes from."

What Dr. Akimbo doesn't know is that the strain of triflexia released in the base was bioengineered by the Empire for use as a poison. Major Madera used the triflexia poison with a needler pistol to infect Dellox. The technician discovered extra parts in the sensor array—parts used for transmitting a beacon to discreetly alert Imperial forces about the existence of the hidden base on Reginard. Madera killed Dellox to save her cover, then killed the X-Wing pilot to make others believe the outbreak of triflexia virus was real.

Ambitious and unquarantined characters might investigate the outbreak of the virus by examining shipping records, fighter logs and other data available in the base's command center.

PASSIVE SENSOR ARRAY

Characters who are not quarantined in sick bay may also examine the passive sensor array. Most of the storage bay is taken up by racks of spare electronics parts and some larger spare X-Wing parts. The sensor array is located in one corner. It is a cylinder about three meters in diameter and two meters high topped by a white geodesic dome. The smoking power coupling is now removed from a large socket in the wall which feeds from the base's electrical system.

Characters searching near the sensor array may roll their Search skill. On a roll greater than 9, PCs discover an electronic part in a pile of junk Dellox kept near the sensor array. A Technology roll greater than 14 identifies the part as one used exclusively for subspace transmissions.

On a Search roll greater than 16, the PCs discover a small metal pin on the ground in the corner. Any analysis shows that the pin is coated with Dellox's infected blood. This metallic sliver was the shot from Major Madera's needler gun which injected the triflexia virus into Dellox.

Characters may offer to repair and continue work on the sensor array (which delights General Corros). The machine needs 40 points of work done. PCs may make one of the following rolls per six hour period to attain the 40 points required:

•Starship Repair. Each point rolled counts as points taken from the 40 needed to finish the array.

•Technology or Computer Program/ Repair. Half the total of every roll can be used as points taken from the 40 total.

Only two characters may work on the sensor array during any six-hour period. Once a cumulative score of 40 has been reached, the sensor array is fully operational, and the power generator short circuit has been repaired. General Corros is very pleased.

Major Madera stops by at least once to see how the work is going. She also answers any questions the PCs have about some things they might find in the sensor array.

If PCs are specifically looking for something out of place in the sensor array, have them roll Technology or Computer Program/Repair *and* Search to see what they discover:

•If both scores are greater than 5, PCs find more sub-space transmitter parts. Characters telling Major Madera of their find are told the transmitter parts are used to send sensor data back to the main base on Reginard (this is true).

•If both scores are greater than 10, characters discover parts with Imperial markings. Major Madera says these were stripped from downed Imperial ships or stolen from nationalized corporations (this is false; the parts are part of the transmitter Madera placed).

•If both scores are greater than 15, PCs find a sizable charge of detonate packed into the sensor array's base. Major Madera says the explosives are a safety device to keep the array from falling into Imperial hands and allowing them to decode Rebel transmission frequencies (true).

SUSPICIOUS REBELS

Characters who suspect foul play in Senior Technician Dellox's death may try to search the base for clues of his apparent assassin.

Searches of cabins, suites and other base areas are difficult due to the high personnel traffic, so a few Hide/Sneak rolls might be needed. The five cabins the PCs might want to search are usually unoccupied most of the time:

General Corros' Suite (occupied on 1D6 roll of 1): The desk, bed and closet locker contain nothing of importance except for a spare blaster pistol, several Rebel uniforms, and a holoportrait of General Obi Wan Kenobi over the desk.

Captain Franco's Suite (occupied on 1D6 roll of 1 or 2): This cabin is similar to General Corros' suite, with a desk, bed and closet locker. The locker contains several uniforms and a full Imperial TIE Fighter pilot's suit with helmet (and a blaster burn mark in its back), a trophy from the X-Wing pilot's earlier days. Characters also find a data tape on Imperial pilot training.

•Major Madera's Suite (occupied on 1D6 roll of 1 or 2): This suite, like the others, contains a bed, desk and storage locker. In the desk, hidden among the contents of a medkit, are two vials of clear liquid marked with strange symbols. Retired Imperial captains or characters rolling more that 20 on Knowledge recognize the symbols as Imperial Code. One is marked "toxin" and the other "antidote." There are no other items of interest in the suite.

Dr. Akimbo's Suite (occupied on 1D6 roll of 1): This suite is filled with the usual bed and desk. The locker is filled with a variety of medical chemicals and instruments only a person with Medicine skill would recognize. A holoimage of a very blue, sea-green planet hangs over his desk, a view of Mon Calamari.

Junior Tech Yeasson's Cabin (occupied on 1D6 roll of 1 or 2): This

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Reginard Base is commanded by five senior officers: General Corros, Major Madera, Captain Franco, Dr. Akimbo and Senior Technician Adonar Dellox. Junior Technician Yeasson takes Dellox's position as chief base technician after his death.

General Halomar Corros: As commander of Reginard Base, General Corros is responsible for all base operations. He can usually be found in the base's command center monitoring banks of computer and tracking screens. The general is a quiet man, and he often scratches his close-cut beard when problems arise. He remembers Dellox as a determined man who liked to work alone, but could always get the job done. The general says he was in the base command center when Dellox died.

DEX 3D, blaster 4D, KNO 4D, bureaucracy 5D, planetary systems 5D, PER 4D, command 6D. All other attributes and skills are 2D. He always carries a blaster pistol and a comlink.

Major Tanya Madera: Reginard Base's second-in-command is in charge of the more mundane base operations, including supply logistics, personnel and schedules. She is polite yet efficient. Madera's tidy uniform and shoulder-length hair hide her true nature. As an Imperial spy, Madera was charged with getting assigned to a hidden Rebel base, then covertly alerting the Imperial Navy of its location. To do this, she has planted a transmitter within the passive sensor array which will broadcast a Class B (Stellar Class) Starport beacon. Dellox was unfortunate enough to discover Madera's plans. If asked where she was when Dellox died, she claims she was working alone in her cabin.

DEX 2D+2, blaster 4D+2, PER 3D+1, hide/sneak 5D+1, TEC 3D, Computer Program/Repair 5D. All other attributes and skills are 2D. She always carries a blaster pistol and comlink.

Captain Tony Franco: The youthful commander of the X-Wing Fighter squadron stationed at Reginard Base can often be found in the flight hangar checking out spacecraft, supervising operations or chatting with his fellow pilots. If asked where he was when Dellox died, he says he was on the flight deck (Junior Tech Yeasson verifies his claim).

DEX 3D, blaster 4D, MEC 4D, all starship piloting skills are 5D. All other attributes and skills are 2D. Franco always carries a blaster pistol and a comlink.

Dr. Akimbo: Although the Mon Calamari has less authority than other senior base officers, he is always consulted on medical and scientific matters. He runs the sick bay and a small laboratory. Akimbo often wears a white lab coat and carries a variety of scientific instruments. Like most Mon Calamari, he is peaceful and gentle, but has a passion for obtaining more knowledge. If asked, he claims he was working in the medical lab alone when Dellox died.

KNO 3D+1, Alien Races 5D+1, Planetary Systems 4D+1, TEC 3D+2, Medicine 5D+2. All other attributes and skills are 2D. Akimbo always keeps a comlink in his lab coat pocket.

Junior Technician Kim Yeasson: The supervisor of the X-Wing technical crews is a capable X-Wing tech. She can often be found on the flight line repairing one of the starfighters. Her roughly cut blonde hair and greasy technician's work suit give Yeasson a rugged look. If asked about Dellox, Yeasson blinks back a tear and refuses to talk about him. Characters who coax her might get her to admit she was repairing X-Wings when Dellox died (technicians and pilots on the flight line verify her claim).

KNO 4D, Technology 5D, TEC 4D, Computer Program/Repair 5D, Starship Repair 6D, Droid Program/Repair 5D, Repulsorlift Repair 4D+2. All other attributes and skills are 2D. Yeasson always carries an assortment of small repair tools in the pockets of her work suit.

cabin is smaller than those of the higher-level officers. The desk is piled with electronic X-Wing components and droid parts (some form Imperial droids). There is also a bunk and a storage locker. An old-repro image of Dellox is buried at the bottom of the locker. Many tools are strewn on the floor and the desk.

DEPLOYING THE SENSOR ARRAY

When work on the sensor array is complete, General Corros asks the characters to deploy the sensor on the other side of Reginard, since the PCs have the only ship with a cargo hold large enough to transport the equipment. If more than 20 hours have passed, characters quarantined in the sick bay are released and may join the others.

General Corros briefs the player characters at the holoprojector in the command center.

"When we first came to Reginard," the general explains, "we mapped the entire planet from orbit." He pulls up a holoimage of Reginard on the projector. "We determined that the best place for the second sensor array would be here," he points with his finger, "a bare hill rising from the thick forest which covers most of that large continent. You'll have to land a short distance away and transport the array on a repulsor sled. Once you've positioned it and turned off the sled, hook up the medium fusion power generator and turn it on. May the Force be with you."

General Corros sends Major Madera along to supervise the sensor deployment. The equipment is loaded onto the characters' ship. The trip to the large continent on the opposite side of the planet takes several hours flying at low altitudes. The field for landing is not far from the hill, and characters have little trouble transporting the sensor array on the repulsor sled to the top of the hill, setting it down and turning it on.

Trouble comes when the characters are about an hour along their journey back to Reginard Base. General Corros hails them on the ship's radio. A ship with a scrambled transponder just came out of hyperspace in the Reginard system and is heading directly for the new sensor array! Characters tracking the ship on their own sensors follow it down to Reginard's surface, to the same clearing they landed in earlier to deploy the sensor array. General Corros orders the PCs, under Major Madera's leadership, to return to the sensor array and find out who landed nearby and why they are headed for the sensors.

When the PCs land near the sensor array, night has fallen on the large continent. Major Madera suggests they approach the other ship on foot and in several groups to gain the advantage of surprise. Unfortunately, the ship is only equipped with three glow rods. Major Madera takes one for herself.

Fanning out in the forest through thick ground foliage, the PCs eventually reach a clearing where a large bulk freighter has landed. It is slightly scored with laser burns, and the name *Queen's Victory* is painted beneath the bridge.

When characters arrive at the edge of the clearing where the *Queen's Victory* has landed, they notice that Major Madera is missing.

Just as they begin searching for her, PCs notice someone circling the downed freighter. "Aw, look what 'ey done to my ship!" the man says to himself. "Bloody Imperium's customs weasels; 'ey never leave you alone." The man is Hawker Bryce-Kelly, smuggler extraordinare (and rather harmless), who landed after escaping from an Imperial customs frigate in another system. If PCs don't immediately greet him, Hawker's Twi'lek co-pilot, Rypka, sneaking up on the characters with her blaster drawn, encourages them to step into the open.

Bryce-Kelly explains that he entered the system and followed the Stellar Class starport beacon to the planet's surface. The smuggler is angry at finding no starport at all. When asked where the landing beacon was, he points toward the hill where the sensor array is positioned.

Major Madera, the Imperial spy, altered the array to transmit a Stellar Class starport beacon as well as perform sensor functions. She is hiding in the forest between the characters and the sensor array waiting to ambush them. In combat, she uses a deadly needler pistol to attack PCs (roll her Blaster skill). The pistol shoots tiny metal pins coated with triflexia toxin. Characters hit by a dart must roll their Stamina greater than 15 to escape the effects of the poison (roll once each round until the needle is removed). If the roll fails, the victim becomes Mortally Wounded. Otherwise, PCs are Incapacitated by the poison.

Once Madera exhausts her supply of five poisoned needles, she uses her blaster pistol to stop the characters from shutting down the sensor array.

As the characters try to find Major Madera and attempt to turn the passive sensor array off, rain begins to fall, making navigation and searches through the underbrush and combat more difficult (+5 to all difficulty numbers).

Hawker Bryce-Kelly and Rypka might help the PCs if they are convinced the Imperials are on their way or if they're attacked. The heavy foliage makes good cover and provides many hiding places.

ENTER THE EMPIRE!

Soon after the PCs defeat the traitorous Madera and shut down the sensor array, Reginard Base hails them on a closed radio frequency to warn of an Imperial Customs Frigate which just entered the Reginard system—most likely on the tail of Hawker Bryce-Kelly. General Corros urges the PCs to either get rid of the sensor array or fly up to intercept the frigate to see what it wants and keep its crew from discovering the base on Reginard.

Imperial Customs Frigate 517 is searching for the *Queen's Victory* and the source of a landing beacon they tracked for a few seconds on an uninhabited planet. The Imperial comm officer hails the PCs as soon as their ship leaves Reginard's atmosphere.

"Imperial Customs Frigate 517 to unidentified small craft, please heave to for boarding and customs inspection."

Characters allowing Customs Inspector Buudro and his two stormtrooper escorts aboard are subjected to a volley of questions regarding their activity in the Reginard system. The Imperials also conduct a cursory search of their ship and cargo bay. Customs Inspector Buudro is also interested in whether the PCs noticed a bulk freighter (the *Queen's Victory*) entering the system.

If the PCs cooperate fully and don't sass Inspector Buudro, the Imperial Customs Frigate departs the system with no further inquiry.

Characters deciding to attack or flee the Imperial Customs Frigate must face or evade the vessel's firepower. Characters openly attacking the frigate might be jeopardizing the secrecy of Reginard Base, especially if they request X-Wing Fighter support over a comm channel. See page 57 of the *Star Wars* rulebook for statistics for the Imperial Customs Frigate.

POINTS

Player characters should get from 7 to 9 skill points based on their participation in the adventure and their roleplaying abilities. The character who discovered or deduced that Madera was an Imperial spy should get an extra 2 skill points. Ω

TL9 Abomination
Infantry Assault Vehicle

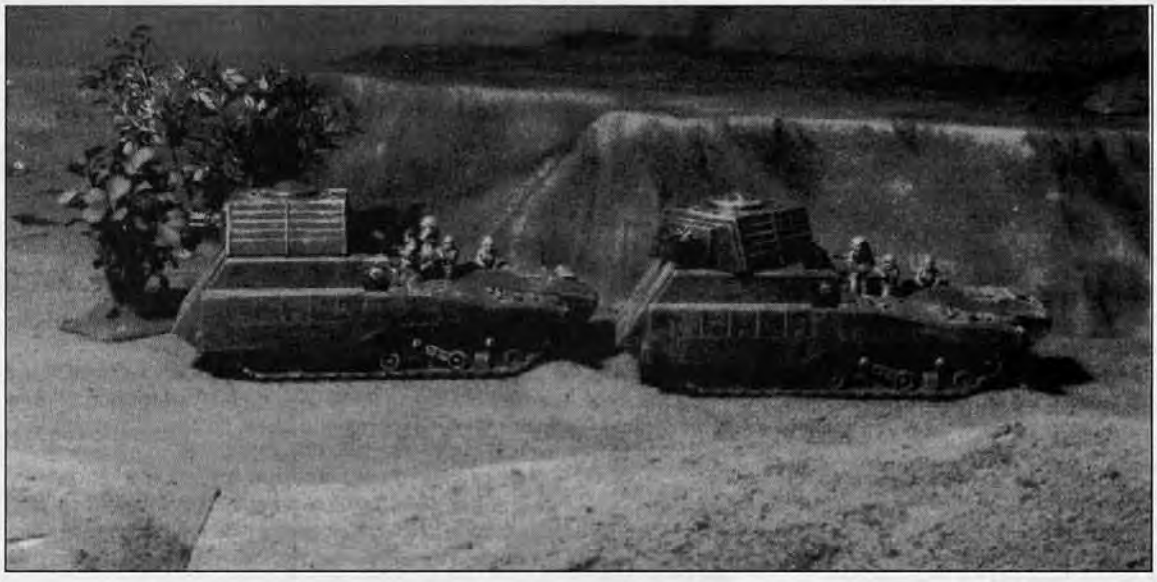
The "Abomination" is a Solomani design that has become widely distributed among the rimward worlds of the former Final Imperium. The Abomination was another AFV design that came out of the Final War, intended for the special circumstances of that bloody, desperate environment.

As Solomani forces gradually expanded into the Imperium, "liberating" the worlds of the former Solomani Autonomous Area, they were forced to bypass a great many formidable pockets of resistance. These pockets were handled by siege units, left behind the advancing lines to reduce stubborn fortified cities and other strongpoints. The Abomination Infantry Assault Vehicle (IAV) was developed in response to the unique demands of this mission to be a rugged, durable terror weapon.

As a siege weapon, the Abomination is intended to operate in an environment of complete orbital, air, and EW superiority, allowing it to dispense with many expensive subsystems of front-line vehicles. Given its job of painstakingly reducing fortified urban areas, its primary features are heavy armor, a highly destructive main armament, and an integral infantry squad. The Abomination's armor is virtually impervious to any man-portable weapon likely to be encountered in siege operations, even from the rear. Few if any fortifications can stand up to sustained fire from the 120mm autocannon's HEAP rounds, and in many cases the role of the embarked infantry squad is merely to police up the dog tags from the defenders' dead bodies. With its fully independent interior environment and power plant, the Abomination is intended to operate in the intense chemical-biological-radiological (CBR) environments that are so often the case in planetary sieges.

As siege operations are intended to operate independently for extended periods, the Abomination is designed for long duration, with a 6-month fuel supply, and full extended life support for its 14 inhabitants, allowing them to live within the vehicle indefinitely, even in hostile environments. The choice of a tracked suspension allows the vehicle's automotive systems and power train to be locally maintained by economies as low as TL5, an advantage in extended siege operations, while the nuclear plant requires servicing only on a semiannual basis.

Abomination IAVs are a favorite prestige and intimidation weapon for the TEDs of the Wilds. Many worlds with TL9 manufacturing capabilities build their own new Abominations, while other worlds make do with relic Abominations whose reactor shielding has suffered over the years. Almost all Wilds Abomination crews are hairless from progressive radiation poisoning, and wear this distinction with a perverse and disturbing pride.



Abomination
Infantry Assault Vehicle

Tech Level: 9

Price: MCr6.460624 (plus ammunition costs, see below)

Size: 420 kiloliters displacement = 30 tons (VS)

Mass: 1207.02 tonnes empty, 1291.52 tonnes loaded

Power: 25 MW fission plant delivering 24.8744 MW to tracked suspension and 0.1256 MW to onboard electronics

Maint: 113

Controls: Computer-linked controls, TL8 satellite positioning navaids

Commo: 2×300-km radios

Sensors: 30km HRT

ECM: None

Life Support: Pressurized environment with extended life support

Cargo: 605 kg equipment in 2.42 m3

Crew: 4 (driver, relief driver, gunner, commander)

Passengers: 10 troops in cramped seats with large cargo hatch (10 troops per turn)

Fire Control: TL8 Direct Fire Fire Control and Digital Ballistic Computer (disregard 2 Diff Mods), plus TL9 Indirect Fire Fire Control

Armament: Turret with stabilized six-barrel 120mmL20 CPR autocannon

Stabilization: Advanced (fire at all speeds)

Ammunition: 1200 rounds 120mm in turret magazine plus additional magazine with 1200 more rounds stored in hull (price varies, see below)

Speed: 57 kph maximum road speed, 46 kph maximum cross-country speed

Travel Move: 110/85

Combat Move: 25/20

Signature: No Diff Mods

Diff Mods vs. Fire: –1 Diff Mod stationary, –1 at safe road speed, 0 at 2× safe road speed and +1 at 3× safe road speed, –1 at safe cross-country speed, 0 at 2× safe cross-country speed, +1 at 3× safe cross-country speed

Fuel Capacity: 2500 liters radioactives (Cr93,750)

Fuel Consumption: 6 months endurance

Combat Statistics

Config: Turret **Susp:** T 60

TF: 288 **HF:** 288
TS: 192 **HS:** 192
TR: 120 **HR:** 120
Deck: 192 **Belly:** 120

Weapon Characteristics

TL-9 120mm/20 caliber 6-barrel autocannon (2.976 Mj)

		Conc-			Danger	Short		——Ammo——	
Round	*ROF*	*Burst*	*Dmg Val*	*Pen Val*	*Space*	*Range*	*IFR*	*Price*	*Weight*
HEAP	10	C: 19, B: 35	—	137C	—	280	11km	471	34.2
HE	10	C: 29, B: 35	—	11C	—	280	11km	321	34.2
Flechette	10	—	2D6/1D6*	1-Nil*	14×56	280	11km	1521	34.2

*In primary/secondary burst area, see **TNE**, page 280

Abomination Infantry Assault Vehicle (TL9)

Troop Quality: _____ **Morale:** ____ **Initiative:** ____
Movement: 130 road (+1, +2, +2), 100 cross-country (—, +1, +2)
Front Armor: 288
Side Armor: 192
Rear Armor: 120
Deck Armor: 192
Belly Armor: 120
Mass Class: VI
Explosive Damage Modifier: –7
Fire Control: Ignores 2 diff mods, TL9 Indirect Fire Control
Stabilization: Advanced (treat cautious and rapid advance as *no order* for ROF and sequence of fire purposes)

Cargo Capacity: 2
Environmental: Sealed, nonair-breathing
Electronic Warfare: None
Ammunition: 60 shots of 12cm (any combination)
Maintenance Points: 113

System:	*Short ( )*	*Medium ( )*	*Long ( )*	*Extreme ( )*	*Notes*
12cm L20 gun-HEAP	28 cm: 5 (137+)	56 cm: 4 (137+)	112 cm: 3 (137+)	224 cm: 2 (137+)	F, S, EP: 9, BR: 4 cm, IFR: 11 km
12cm L20 gun-HE	28 cm: 5 (11+)	56 cm: 4 (11+)	112 cm: 3 (11+)	224 cm: 2 (11+)	F, S, EP: 11, BR: 4 cm, IFR: 11 km
12cm L20 gun-flechette	28 cm: 5* (2)	56 cm: 4* (2)	112 cm: 3* (2)	224 cm: 2* (2)	F, S, DS: 2×6 cm
Sensors:					
30 km HRT	(30 km)	(60 km)	(120 km)	(240 km)	
Eyeballs	100 cm	200 cm	400 cm	800 cm	
Communications:					
300 km radio	(300 km)	(600 km)	(1200 km)	(2400 km)	

Cybergeneration

R. Talsorian Games. $25.
Written by Mike Pondsmith, Ed Bolme and David Ackerman.
192-page supplement to Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.
Published August 1993.
Review by Paul Lucas.

Evolve or die.

That is the catch-phrase of *Cybergeneration*, R. Talsorian's foray into the ultra-tech dystopia of *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.* The year is 2027. The megacorps have won the Edgerunner revolution of 2020 and now run the ISA (the Incorporated States of America) with an iron grip. The surviving Edgerunners have mostly sold out or are hunted fugitives. It seems that there is no one left who could possibly stand against the now all-powerful megacorps.

Or is there?

In *Cybergeneration*, you play a teenager, maximum age 19, culled from one youth gang ("yogang") or another. These groups include the Acrorunners, tunnel rats who specialize in infiltrating; Beaverbrats, picture-perfect suburban kids who lead secret lives as vicious pranksters; Goldenkids, offspring of the super-rich; MegaViolents, who live just to mess somebody up; and 14 others gangs such as Boardpunks, Ecoraiders, Goths, Mallbrats, Squats, Streetfighters and Vidiots. Each group—besides having its own traditions, look, attitude, and slang—has its own special skill. For instance, Facers have Facedance, the ability to mimic others in appearance and mannerism, and Tinkerbots have Kitbash, the talent to create and modify new tech. Each yogang is well detailed, and gives both players and referees plenty of material to help in roleplaying the characters.

All the gangs have one thing in common: a rebellious nature coupled with hatred for the dictatorial powers running the country. Many of them want of do something about it. But even with all their street smarts and talent, what chance do they have against the monolithic ISA?

CARBON PLAGUE

A crashed AV-4 has released a deadly nanotech-based plague on the population. If you are an adult and you contract it, you die. If you are a kid and contract it, you change. The nanites radically alter your bodily systems and impart to you what basically amount to superpowers. Abilities can range from reading minds to shooting deadly electrical arcs to reshaping matter. These abilities are plausibly explained and will please gamers who like to get their science right. Bolters, for instance, evolve new organs in their abdomens which gather and store static electricity from the environment. They also have much of their nervous system replaced by a system of bio-organic electrical conductors, which transfers the current to special discharge meshes in their hands.

However, these abilities are more a curse than a blessing. The ISA fears the Carbon Plague and those who carry it, and sets about to either ruthlessly control the Cybervolved or wipe them out altogether. The kids are viciously hunted down by government lapdogs armed with arsenals the kids can't possibly match even with their new powers.

But the Cyberevolved do have a few allies. Several of the surviving Edgerunners emerge from hiding and begin organizing the ragtag survivors of the Plague into a guerilla army. A revolution has begun, as the ISA and the Cyberevolved battle to determine the future of the country and the world.

For the technology nuts out there, the book includes a section on upgraded equipment for the world of 2027. The most significant new development is Virtuality, which allows people to blend the real world and computer-generated images through the use of remote VR nodes implanted in their heads.

EVALUATION

This is a very impressive product, both in concept and execution. It is a very handsome product, well-organized and lavishly illustrated. It was an engrossing read from cover to cover, something rare in the gaming market.

Cybergeneration is obviously meant to be a major supplement for *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.*, though it functions adequately as a standalone game, with watered-down but serviceable combat and task rules from the predecessor game. But the rules don't really matter: Like in White Wolf's *Vampire* game, the emphasis here is on roleplaying and storytelling. The kids you play don't have all that many resources, aside from their cybergenerated abilities and innate talents, forcing them to survive and triumph often on raw wits and luck alone. The referee is supplied with generous advice on creating and staging adventures in the world of 2027.

Cybergeneration is a very welcome development, and puts R. Talsorian's future history right up there with the works of William Gibson and George Alec Effinger. The background is exciting and intriguing, and allows for a wide variety of potential adventures. The game also shies away from the nihilistic pessimism that permeates most cyberpunk futures, allowing characters to hope that, if they struggle hatd enough, things can get better.

Cybergeneration is an impressive product that any true chromebrain gamer should not do without.

Shatterzone

West End Games. $30.

Written by Greg Farshtey, Ed Stark, Shane Hensley and Dave Wetzel.

Boxed roleplaying game containing three 96-page softcover books, two card decks, two 10-sided dice and a newsletter.

Published in 1993.

Review by Paul Lucas.

There is a wall in space, a vast barrier of dark matter and energy that is undetectable until you are practically on top of it. It may or may not be a natural phenomenon.

And it seems it is not so much keeping humankind out of the interior of the galaxy as it is keeping something far worse, in.

This barrier is called the Shatterzone, and it is the central premise of West End's science-fiction RPG. This is a space opera with several intriguing concepts set in a dark and violent universe.

The three books included in the set include The Pla*yers' Book*, detailing character creation and basic game concepts, *The Rules Book*, which expands on the game systems and tells referees how to run *Shatterzone* games, and *The Universe Book*, containing background information on the game universe. Each book is cleanly edited and well-organized, with concise prose that makes for painless reading. Each book is lavishly illustrated, though too many of the illustrations tend toward splattering blood and exposed spleens for my tastes (one rendering, for example, shows a long-necked alien eating a split-open human astronaut with a spoon).

Character creation can take one of two forms: A *Shatterzone* player may simply choose one of the pre-made Character Templates, such as Old Scout, Kestarien Temptress, Shtrat Blacklunger, Megacorp Freelancer, or others for quick-start campaigns. For players who want more in-depth characters, they are encouraged to first think of a concept and general background for the PC, and then work with the referee to work out the player character's game profile and statistics. In either case, no random die rolling is needed.

Most tasks in *Shatterzone* are performed by rolling 2D10, adding relevant skill levels, and seeing if the resultant sum equals or exceeds a GM-determined Difficulty Number (DN). Every point rolled over the DN determines the degree of success, which can affect various consequences of the task, such as combat damage. Variations on this system allow you to accomplish seemingly impossible feats by "pushing" your physical limits (at a cost in shock points) or getting real lucky (any natural 10 rolled on certain tasks can be rolled over and added to the original total).

The funniest part of *Shatterzone* system, however, is the card deck, a neat innovation. At the beginning of each game session, each player receives a hand of special cards provided with the game. The cards have many various functions, such as the action card, which adds to the task roll, or Haste, which allows the PC to move faster. These can be used by the player at any crucial point in the game, particularly combat, went he PCs might need an extra edge. Some cards are Subplot cards like Romance or Mistaken Identity, which must be shown to the GM immediately. The GM must then try to work the subplots into the adventure, keeping the game exciting and unpredictable for all.

Rules for other aspects of the game are included, such as special cases, character interaction, and space travel and combat. A disappointment is the world creation section, which is far too brief and obscure to be of much use.

The background material is an uneven affair. Some aspects of it are exquisitely detailed, while others are head-scratchingly obscure. For example, the structure and inhabitants of the Shatterzone itself are extensively described, but its typography is never addressed (where exactly is it located in relation to human space? Does it surround human space? Is it a two-dimentional barrier? If so, why can"t humanity just expand in the other direction?)

The science in S*hatterzone* is definitely soft, owing more to traditional science fiction lore than to contemporary science fact. This is a most evident in the Alien Race entries, most of which suffer from the "rubber suit" syndrome (i.e., they act just like 20th-century American humans in rubber alien suits).

The one exception is the Ishantra, an alien race made up of the amalgam genetic codes of dozens of different species. I only wish the game designers would have expanded more on them and left out some of the more hackneyed aliens, such as the B-movie Kestarian sex kittens.

Despite all this, however, there is some very good material here. The power structure of the Consortium of Worlds is very well detailed, and many of the individual worlds are given interesting and idea-spawning write-ups. The technology presented is comprehensive if uninspired.

EVALUATION

Shatterzone is not for the hard-core science fans or for those who think space opera games should offer feelings of hope and optimism. The Shatterzone universe is dark and dangerous, with the oppressive, Megacorp-dominated Consortium running civilized space and the ultra-powerful, genocidal Armagons lurking somewhere just beyond the zone. It is a place where death is easy and your life is cheaper than the energy collectors you're transporting.

In other words, it is a place where most gamers will love, rife with conflict, intrigue, exotic worlds, and the underside of human nature.

If one can overlook the occasional unevenness of the game's background, *Shatterzone* can be a worthy addition to any gaming library. Ω

Ask Commodore Bwana

Being in the main an alliterative attempt at aknowledging the awsome arenas of accomplishment that may be attained by audacity, augmented by assiduous attentiveness, in applying the apodictic articles of Traveller the New Era, except that sometimes it's not alliteration at all, but really assonance

and not, drat it all,

The kind of issue that will really shake this country up once and for all and get everybody to wake up and smell the things that they left out on the counter the night before, and for the last time, those incumbents, and, ooooh, those talk-show hosts who are so much smarter than the rest of us, and how come we haven't heard anything out of the Trilateral Commission for a while, while the talking heads drone on and on about why we shouldn't be listening to pundits anyway, but instead should be reading stuff like this, and the voices, the voices, THE VOICES!!

Volume I, Number 7

Anchors aweigh, my boys, anchors aweigh!

Seasons greetings, me hearties, landlubbers, sea lawyers, salts, swabs, square-knot admirals, gold brickers, and other scavengers of the seven seas, from Commodore Bwana's Holiday Flagship!

It would appear that we have all weathered another year of outrageous fortune, and worse for wear or not, are about to be greeted by 1995 like a Saint Bernard on PCP. I'm looking forward to it. Are you? But enough skullduggery! Time for someone to walk the plank! Avast there! Har!

Dear Commodore,

*I have followed the **Traveller** universe for almost 10 years (Jeez—10 years! Has it really been that long?!). I must say that you guys have the best SF RPG around. I'm very excited about the **TNE** concept (pardon the drool...) and I can't wait for the **Traveller** products you guys have planned. I have noticed a few inconsistencies, however, and I wonder if you could straighten them out for me. Here goes:*

*1) In the **TNE** basic rules, page 337, under Vac Suit Misc. Accessories, you have the Thermal Meteoroid garment as having "armor 6, Cloth -1"—so which is it? (better yet, what does it mean?)*

*2) Same page, you have the Body Pressure Suit as having "Armor as Jack" for a special feature. Hey, this is **TNE**, what's "Jack" supposed to mean now?*

*3) In the **TNE** basic rules, page 341, you have the hand computer listed as a "Model 1" equivalent. Again, this is **TNE**, what's that supposed to mean now? (As a matter of fact, it would be cool if you put out more on how computers work in the game, as far as memory capacity, what you can and can't do with them, typical programs, etc.)*

Other questions:

1) How long are first aid and other medical tasks supposed to take?

*2) Can grav vehicles (e.g., air rafts, grav tanks, speeders) achieve orbit and operate in orbit (or even be dropped from orbit like the nifty picture of the grav tanks being dropped [I assume] from a merc cruiser in the **TNE** book implies)?*

That's it for now! Please, please, please, please, please give me an answer ('cuz if you don't I have a stack of photocopied letters ready to send to you on a weekly basis until you do).

Thanks, Good Luck, and Good Job!

Mark Halvorsen

*(that's Halv-**o**-rs-**e**-n. Please don't switch them around like everyone else does) (I hate that...)*

Oh Yeah—one more thing:

***2300 AD** looks like a cool game. Are you going to integrate it into the House System? How about telling me where to find some rules for the game (nobody has any).*

Okay, Okay—just one more and that's it:

Starship combat—what's the benefit of active sensors (besides greater range for EMS for example) when it makes it so easy for people to see you?)

Shiver me timbers, Mark, that's a lot of questions for a swabbie like yourself, so I'll have to draw myself up to my full height and prepare to... Oh I'm sorry, I was lost in, umm, thought. Prepare to, oh, answer your questions, I guess.



1) Well, it stinks to be confronted with embarrassing truths, but truth is truth, and must be accommodated. What you have found there is what we in Her Majesty's Navy refer to as something I'm not allowed to say, but which folks in the publishing biz call a "glitch." To save time when we were preparing **The New Era**, we used some old electronic files from earlier editions of **Traveller** to serve as outlines for the equipment lists, and in some cases we missed a few anachronisms when converting equipment ratings and descriptions into New Era terms. The correct armor value in **TNE** terms is Armor Value 1.

This has been corrected in the second printing of the **TNE** rulebook (repeat along with me, all of those who have heard this before: which is recognizable by the notation "**Mark I, Mod 1 (December 1993)**" on the credits page.

2) This is another glitch, but can be deciphered in your copy of the book. See the table on page 359 which shows that Jack armor has an armor value of (½). But of course we all know that in **TNE** "Jack" means jack, if you follow my meaning.

Sad to say, in the second printing this has only been incompletely corrected, and says simply, "Armor." (Why, I oughtta...this time it's the Plank, I tell you, the PLANK!!) This should say "Armor (½)."

3) Guess what? This is also another glitch, and has been corrected in the second printing (you know how to recognize it) by the substitution of the following passage:

Computer, Hand: This is a small, powerful multi-function computer that can be used to store and recall basic factual data, perform complex calculations, and control other electronic devices.

Hand computers can be optimized for certain fields of knowledge by the use of modular data clips which can be easily inserted and removed (Cr200 each). When fitted with the proper data clip, the hand computer adds +1 to a character's asset for tasks of a purely factual or technical nature, such as Research tasks. Data clips for particular applications allow characters to use the hand computer to calculate jump parameters, ballistic performance, chemical formulae, etc.

The hand computer can be linked to various sensors (pages 346-7) and allows them to be monitored or controlled from a distance. The hand computer also serves as a computer terminal when linked to a larger computer (such as on board a ship).

Other questions:

1) We leave this up to the referee, as it will logically vary based upon the task. Simple first aid procedures will be a matter of seconds (injecting a drug, prescribing a pill) to minutes (binding a wound). More complicated surgical procedures can be a matter of hours.

2) Yes, and the time required to reach orbit is based on their G-ratings. However, their propulsion must be air-independent, otherwise they will "flame out" at high altitudes.

We know what you mean about the name thing. We have some Nilson guy who works here who gets all bent out of shape about the same thing.

Yes, we do intend to someday reissue **2300 AD** as a campaign background using the **TNE** rules system, but there is no schedule set for this at the present time. Many out-of-print titles are still available from GDW (send SASE for list), but unfortunately the **2300 AD** rules set is not among them. For out-of-print products, we suggest people try Egor's Discount Game Warehouse at (716) 427-2190, Weekend Warrior at (818) 988-1441, Zocchi Distributors at (601) 863-0215, or the **Challenge** classifieds section. Remember that it is illegal to sell photocopies, and to give PCP to Saint Bernards.

Re: active sensors, the answer is precisely what you said: their longer range. Active sensors usually are a more reliable way of detecting noncooperative targets, but the price is that it makes you easier to see. Active sensors are the tools of choice for ships who don't care who knows they are there, but they are not so useful when you want to be sneaky. Also, unlike long-range passive sensors, which often require extendable arrays and cannot be used in atmospheres, active arrays are always functional, provided there is enough power to run them.

Like most things in life, active sensors are a trade-off: you must balance their advantages against their disadvantages when deciding whether to use them or install them on a starship. Is the range worth the energy cost? Is the detection ability worth the greater chance of being detected yourself? (Remember, however, that passive sensors only get the +DM against active sensors that are from the same or lower TL.) That's all up to you.

Well, time's a wasting, my little sea cucumbers and cucumberettes. From the USS *Roxy Music*, this is Commodore Bwana, saying, "BRING US SOME FIGGY PUDDING!!"

Challenge 76

Rate each article from 0 to 5. 0 means you did not read the article. 1 indicates great dissatisfaction, and 5 indicates great satisfaction. 2, 3 and 4 are shades in between. To use a separate sheet, list each article number, then your rating (be sure to indicate the issue number). Send responses to:

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I AM LOOKING for a gamer named Steven "Tuffy" Stufflebeam. He used to live in the Topanga area of LA and now might be on the east coast (NJ?). If you have information, please contact Magee, 12761 Gladstone Ave., Sylmar, CA 91342. (75)

LOOKING FOR *Battletech* and **Traveller** players in the Karns area. Can referee or play. Extensive *Battletech* and **Traveller** library and game aids. Contact Gary Miller, 8911 Emory Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-1614. (72)

GAMER IN EXILE looking for players in southern West Virginia. Any RPG system welcome. Also need people interested in a PBM SF RPG I'm running. Contact W. C. Bargo, 1505 Temple St., Hinton, WV 25951-2035. (72)

BATTLETECH PLAYERS: The AFMG recruiting address has changed, but we are still around. If you are interested in a top-quality PBM, write to AFMG Recruiting, c/o Jim Domarad, 1039 W. Emerald, Mesa, AZ 85210-3410. (72)

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WANTED

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WOULD LIKE TO BUY previous **Challenge** issues, sourcebooks and anything related to **2300 AD**. Make precise offer to Delcourt Gilles, Rue Des Eglantiers 2A, 4540 Amay, Belgium. (76)

CHALLENGE 49 and 50. Will pay reasonable price. Please contact J. Langnes, PO Box 160, Mandeville, LA 70448. Am also interested in trading home-made adventures with another **2300** GM. (76)

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STAR WARS: Dark Empire and *Tales of the Jedi* comic books. I would be willing to buy or trade TSR gaming material for them. Send issue number and prices to Kevin Quashie, 2 Lamong Ct., Sicklerville, NJ 08081-1904. (75)

STAR TREK and *Doctor Who:* FASA. Any related items, including miniatures, sourcebooks, adventurers, etc., and magazine articles specifically from *Gateways, Stardate* and **Challenge** magazines. Please send list and phone number to Mike Wilson, PO Box 27634, Concord, CA 94527-0634. (75)

STARFORCE spaceships by QT Models and *Starfleet Wars* spaceships by Superior Models that have been mothballed in good condition. I am willing to pay a reasonable price. I am also interested in any other information on these ranges, unit types and names, organizational data, etc. Please send a photo and list of ships available, with the name and type specified (i.e., destroyer, cruiser, etc.), condition (good, very good, escellent), and the price. Rob Kent, 7156 Calero Hills Ct., San Jose, CA 95139. (75)

LOOKING FOR supplements to FASA's *Star Trek: Starship Tactical Combat Simulator,* particularly the *Ship Construction Manual* and the *Ship Recognition Manual* for the Federation or Romulans. Contact Armand Larraga, 14 Gillian Dr., Kendall Park, NJ 08824. (75)

ANY INFORMATION, blueprints and background material from the Transformers toy line made by Hasbro. Need data on Cybertron homeworld as well. Material will be compensated for. Transformers SFRPG in design preparation. Contact Universe Products, POB 10142, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0142. (72)

TRAVELLER'S AIDE SOCIETY Journal 1 and early **Traveller** items. Will trade or purchase. Gary Miller, 8911 Emory Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-1614. (72)

BATTLETECH supplements *Rolling Thunder, Kell Hounds, Gray Death Legion* and *Sorensons Sabres.* Can trade *Rifts* or *Marvel,* or pay full price plus a finder's fee. Also want any magazines or fanzines with *Battletech* material. Contact Joey Cohen, 7452 N. Washtenaw, Chicago, IL 60645. (72)

SOLO GAME BOOKS: Every genre wanted. *Sorcery! 1-4* and *Spellbook, Middle Earth Quest: Mines of Moria, TSR Catacombs: Knights of the Living Dead, Car Wars 3-6, Fighting Gantasy 4-41, Heroes Challenge 1-4, Combat Command, Sniper!, Marvel Superheroes 1-8, Grailquest, Freeway Warrior 1-4, Crossroads, AD&D 1-18,* etc. (not *Lone Wolf* or *Grey Star*). Also solo RPG scenarios, *TFT.* E. Jackman, 1815 Butler Ave. 120, Los Angeles, CA 90025. (72)

ATTENTION CLUBS: We are compiling a national directory of gaming and SF clubs, and we want to include your organization. Listings in the directory are free. Write for a survey form to Unconventional Graphics, 841 Worcester Road, Suite 207, Worcester, MA 01760. (72)

LOOKING FOR **JTAS** volumes and older **Traveller** game materials and miniatures. Also *Renegade Legion/Centurion* miniatures. Contact Gary Miller, 8911 Emory Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-1614. (72)

TRAVELLER SUPPLEMENTS. GDW: **Secret of the Ancients, JTAS 15, 16, 18-24, Alien Modules 2, 4, 5**. DGP: *Starship Operator's Manual, 101 Robots, Travellers' Digest 5-21, MegaTraveller Journal 1-2, Flaming Eye.* Please Contact J. A. Holden, 1221 E. Charleston Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85022. (72)

FANZINES

CAMELOT '94, a monthly fanzine covering all RPG systems. Buy a one-year subscription now and receive an official Camelot '94/Sim City trading card! Card available while supplies last. Camelot '94, c/o Philip J. Reed Jr., 319 W. Grand, Perryville, MO 63775. (76)

THE LOST GAMER, a new and unique fanzine, is seeking adventure scenarios and articles. Please write for submission guidelines. For a free copy, contact *The Lost Gamer,* 5931 Lake Nacoma, San Antonio, TX 78222. (76)

DO YOU PLAY HORROR or weird fantasy games? Do you want to find a fanzine which covers these topics, not for a specific ghame, but for as many as we can find? Then check us out! *Serendipity's Circle* is a new publication for fans of the macabre side of gaming. Contact *Serendipity's Circle,* 12345 Lake City Way NE, Suite 147, Seattle, WA 98125. (76)

MAKE THE CONNECTION with *The Gamer's Connection,* the small press publication for roleplaying enthusiasts. Contact Gold Rush Games, PO Bix 2531, Elk Grove, CA 95759. (76)

MELBOURNE TIMES: Newsletter of the Earth Colonies Development League (ECDL) provides background material for completely new, non-Imperium **Traveller** setting with 3D campaign area based upon system locations from **2300 AD** Near Star Map. Features news service, world briefs, character sketches, sophont descriptions, corporate portfolios, political analysis, cultural events and more. Subscribers and contributors send large SASE to *Melbourne Times,* c/o David Johnson, PO Box 891403, Houston, TX 77289. Overseas include three IRCs. (75)

AAB PROCEEDINGS: Exclusively **Traveller** newsletter from the History of the Imperium Group (HIWG). Covers all areas in Imperial space, product development and member projects. 10 pages, 4-6 times per year, $2 per issue. Send letter-sized SASE to Clayton Bush, Box 895, Limon, CO 80828 for list of available HIWG documents, programs and spreadsheets. (75)

ALLIANCE ADDRESS: This new *Star Wars* gaming newsletter has adventures, campaign settings for the second edition, new character templates, dossiers, game updates and reviews, and more. Send a legal-sized SASE to Planitia Publications, POB 10142, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0142. (72)

SILVER GRIFFIN: A magazine for enthusiastic gamers. Contact *Silver Griffin,* PO Box 1751, St. Paul, MN 55101. (72)

THE TRAVELLER CHRONICLE: A new magazine covering all aspects of **Traveller**, from original to New Era. Published quarterly. Contact Sword of the Knight Publications, 2820 Sunset Lane 116, Henderson, KY 42420. (72)

BEAUMAINS: The Arthurian magazine for gamers. *Pendragon* scenarios, historical and literary background and discussions, etc. Published 3-4 times per year. Submissions welcome, especially artwork. The first three issues now available from Gareth Jones, 69 Atherley Road, Shirley, Southampton, England SO1 5DT. (72)

GAMERS FORUM was *Apart* newsletter. It still covers a wide range of games. Send your request for a free copy. We are open for articles and art submissions. Write to David P. Kufner, 800 Emory St., Apt. B, Imperial Beach, CA 91932. (71)

FGMP-16, a quarterly newsletter dedicated to **Traveller** miniatures rules, equipment, battles and campaigns. Features terrain-building techniques, new battletanks and Aslan mercenary battalions. Every issue will contain a new vehicle or two, and 15mm starship deck plans. The exploits of Kelly's Highlanders, a tank mercenary battalion, will also be covered. Contact Mike Kelly, 10710 Evergreen Wayt, C-308, Everett, Washington 98204. (71)

DARK TIMES, a quarterly newsletter dedicated to **Dark Conspiracy**, features new proto-dimensions, equipment, adventures and darktek. The Darklords and evil minions will also be covered in detail. Each issue will have a complete adventure ready for play. Contact Mike Kelly, 10710 Evergreen Way, C-308, Everett, Washington 98204.

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITANNIC TECHNLOGICAL SOCIETY, a newsletter in support of the **Space: 1889** game system, is now available and is seeking submissions. For inquiries and submission guidelines, send a SASE to *TJBTS,* 21W127 Tee Lane #3, Itasca, IL 60143. (70)

SILVER GRIFFIN: A roleplaying magazine. Now in its third year and getting better, this publication offers game articles, game reviews, book reviews, fiction, a superhero universe that you can submit superheroes or supervillains to, and highly detailed pencil half-tine covers. Contact *Silver Griffin,* PO Box 1751, St. Paul, MN 55101. (70)

IMPERIAL NEWS SERVICE seeks writers and artists. Our fanzine is devoted entirely to original **Traveller** (not **MegaTraveller** or any new version). We publish adventures, supplements and campaign aids. Please contact Star Quest Games, RR 1, Box 81, Flat Rock, IL 62427-9735 for subscriptions and guidelines for writers and artists. (70)

next issue

Twilight

The Rocket's Red Glare
At last—the long-awaited winner of the Twilight scenario contest! *By George William Herbert*

German Combat Equipment
Light weapons and personal gear fielded by German forces in the war. *By Hans-Christian Vortisch*

The New Era

Short Nap
PCs awaken from cold berths to find themselves held prisoner by raiders in the Wilds. *By Michael R. Mikesh*

Contact Profile: Clarissa Noir
There's more going on with this corporate liaison than meets the eye. *By Greg Videll*

Notes on Collapsing Worlds
The official procedure for converting old data to the new standards. *By Mark "Geo" Gelinas*

Dark Conspiracy

The Shroud
Can the PCs recover a mysterious shroud stolen from an alien corpse? *By David W. Schuey*

The Beast Under the Bed
It's a time for worry, a time for dread. That scratching's not your imagination; its not in your head. It's the beast under the bed. *By Michael C. LaBossiere*

Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.

Black Market
Explore the black markets, where anything banned or restricted by the government can be found, and profit is always the prime concern. *By Justin Schmid*

Cthulhu

Evil of the Centuries
In a scenario involving a mummy, players generally assume they are to be chased by a bandage-swathed monster. If only life—and death—were that simple. *By J.B. Hill*

Space: 1889

City of Tomorrow
Wet, exhausted and chilled to the bone, the PCs reach the shore of the island and collapse on the beach. They see no sign of life. *By James L. Cambias*

Shadowrun

New York City Subways, 2054
It's dark, noisy, foul smelling, dangerous—all that and more. But it's a part of the city that you'd better know about. *By Mark P. Gutis*

2300 AD

The Esper Project
Is this wild-eyed, bloody woman an escaped mental patient suffering from paranoid delusions or a victim of illegal psychic esperiments? *By Paul Lucas*

Star Wars

Pandora's Box
A burned-out bulk freighter with some large holes in its hull lazily floats across the transparesteel viewport of the character's ship. What secrets lie inside? *By Peter Rausch*

GURPS

Gene-Splices
I could see their eyes—red with blood lust. Fingers held closed on their triggers. Calves and thighs strained in forceful acceleration,shoulders straight and strong, mouths open and shining, sharpened canine teeth. They half yelled and half howled in horrible blood-stained berzerker delight. *By Marc Janssen*

Reviews

A Fire Upon the Deep from Tor Books.
Zombies of the Gene Pool from Ballantine Books.
Operation: Rimfire from R. Talsorian Games.

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